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DRAMA

IN

SANSKRIT LITERATURE

BY

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PREFACE

Three reasons have made me write this book.

1. I am a student and ardent admirer of *Sanskrit* literature.

2. In my own language and province I have been a dramatist of some reputation and have fifteen years' experience of producing and acting plays, and,

3. After ' Sanskrit Drama,' that readable and authoritative volume of the late Dr. A. B. Keith, there has been no work dealing generally with the history of *Sanskrit* drama.

It would be, presumptuous to disregard as trifling or insignificant the contribution which the Western and our critics have made to the study of the Sanskrit Drama. But their pioneering enthusiasm should not obscure us to the fact that dramatic criticism in Sanskrit has so far proceeded on such orthodox lines that the last seventy or eighty years appear to have added but little to our understanding of the greatness of the classical tradition or the significance of individual plays either as works of art or as stages of development of the dramatic art. The fact that the Sanskrit plays possess a poetic splendour all their own seems to have weighed so heavily on the minds of the critics that invariably the more significant fact that they are plays first and poetry next has either been, ignored, or forgotten. We would be paying but a poor compliment to our dramatists if we merely treated them as purveyors of the epic or traditional stories with some embellishments. That they had something definite of their own to convey through rearrangements or modifications of the age-old stories should therefore be assumed as a preliminary to an appreciation of the special contribution of each single dramatist, and the critic, if he is insightful enough, will find in the end that his assumptions will be amply substantiated and proved. The same has to be said about what little has been done in evolving a consistent account of the growth and development of Sanskrit Drama. Dependance on scanty internal evidence has led to unending controversy. It has never even been suspected that a close examination of the growth of dramatic technique may throw a good deal of light on the course of the development of the pre-classical and classical drama. In the main I have approached the, subject from these

points of view and I am sure some of my conclusions will offend the orthodox critic. Yet I do not consider the present work as a study, either complete or satisfactory. It is my intention to complete it by another volume dealing with the stage, the production *etc.*, in ancient and mediaeval India and to bring the story of the Indian Stage upto the modern times.

In writing the following chapters I have depended mostly on *Sanskrit* originals. Dealing mainly with the history of the art of drama I have not troubled myself with the vexed question of the dates of the various dramatists. Nevertheless, the order in which. I have dealt with the individual dramatists represents, in my view, the chronological order of those dramatists.

I must add one word about the quotations from original *Sanskrit.* I have preferred the Roman script (but avoided giving Devanagari side by side, for want of space) since that reaches both Indian and foreign readers.

Some chapters of this book were written as early as ten years ago. Some of them appeared in journals to all of which I am thankful.

To my friends, Prof. V. M. Inamdar and Sjt H. S. Patil, goes the entire credit of seeing the book from the preparation of the manuscript to the preparation of the index and through the press. But for their enthusiasm the publication would not have been as desirable as it certainly claims to be.

I must thank all those readers, friends and actor-collaborators of mine who never suspected that I would learn in their company, if not at their cost. To my students in the college also my thanks are due for what I have learnt while teaching them *Sanskrit* poetry, *Sanskrit* rhetorics and *Sanskrit* Drama.

My heartiest thanks are due to one of my friends and sym pathisers but for whose timely and liberal help the book could never have been published.

January 1947 *.Dharwa,* } R. V.jAGIRDAR

WORKS REFERRED TO WITH THEIR ABBREVIATIONS

R. V.	:	Rgveda.
S. V.	:	Samaveda.
Y. V.	:	Yajurveda.
A. V.	:	Atharvanaveda.
Mbh.	:	Mahabhlarata.
Ram.	:	Ramayana.
N. S.	:	Natya Sastra (Kashi Sk. Series).
D. R.	:	Dasarupakam.
S. D.	:	Sahityadarpana.
M. S.	:	Manusmrti.
C. H. I.	:	Cambridge History of India.
G. E. I.	:	Great Epics of India.
Bib. Drama.	:	Bibliography of Sanskrit Drama (Columbia University: Indo-Iranian Series, Vol. III).
Skt. Drama.	:	The Sanskrit Drama by late Professor A. B. Keith.
Brit. Drama.	:	British Drama by A. Nicolls.
Ind. Theat.	:	The Indian Theatre by E. P. Horrwitz.

sA'S PLAYS :

Prat.	:	Pratima
Abhi.	:	Abhitsekanataka.
Bal.	:	Balacarita
S. V.	:	Svapnavasavadatta.
P. Y.	:	Pratijna Yaugandharayana.
P. R.	:	Pancaratra.
M. V.	:	Madhyamavyayoga.
D. V.	:	DutaVakya.
D. G.	:	Dutaghatotkaca.
K. B.	:	Karnabhara.
U. B.	:	Orubhanga.
Car.	:	Carudatta.
Avi.	:	Avimlaraka.

DASA'S PLAYS :

A. Sak.	:	Abhijnanasakuntalam.
Vik.	:	Vikramorvasiyam.
Malav.	:	Malavikagnimitram.

Mrchh.	:	Mrchhakatikam of Sudraka.

BHAVABHUTIS PLAYS :

M. V. C. : Mahaviracaritam.
M. M. : Malati Madhavam.
U. R. : Uttararamacaritam.

HARSA'S PLAYS :

P. D. : Priyadarsika.
Nag. : Naganandam.
Rat. : Ratnavali

M. R. : Mudraraksasam of Visakhadatta.
V. S, : Venisamharam of Bhattanarayaina.
K. M. : Kundamala.
A. R. : Anargha-Raghava.
Pras. R. : Prasanna-Raghava.
Prab. C. Prabodha Candrodaya.
K. M. Karpura Manjari.
B. B. Balabharata.
Sub. D. Subhadra-Dhananjaya.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

GROWTH OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE

The scope of the following pages is extremely limited. An attempt will be made to survey that part of Sanskrit Literature which pertains to Drama in the popular sense of that word. The survey would be many-sided : Sanskrit Drama in theory, in practice, in its relations to contemporary social conditions and its place in Literature in general and so on. Thus a study of Sanskrit Literature itself, though in outlines, would be essential to start with. That study forms the background for the present work. Sanskrit Drama is one of the chief aspects of Sanskrit Literature.

To enable the readers to follow our thesis it will have to be explained at the outset as to what is meant by Literature. For our purposes Literature means two things. (1) Literature is life—Life understood as a vital force always working through and in relation to its surroundings. In this sense Literature is far wider in its scope as well as in its form. In trees and in flowers budding in spring or fading in autumn, in rivers flowing and in seas surging, in the rustling of wind and in the singing of birds, equally as in the behaviour of Man is embedded Life's Literature. Life expressed, Life interpreted, Life asserted and Life made living—all this is Literature. To a man of routine life, however, such a literature is denied in its freshness. (2) Thus arises the second meaning of Literature, viz., the work of Poets. A poet is one who has seen Life as expression, accommodation and assimilation and who holds out for others, like a mirror, this vision of his. It is this mirror held, this attempt to convey one's vision! to others, that constitutes literature.

Sanskrit Literature is no exception to these general observations. From the early days when hymns were chanted by the Vedic seers to the rising sun in the east, to the shining fire on the altar, to the thundering clouds above, we find in literary compositions contemporary life and thoughts. Some of the Vedic hymns, especially those sung in honour of the Dawn or of Indra, the wielder of the Thunderbolt, are fine specimens of fact and fancy. The Vedic; hymns are the earliest known (Sanskrit) Literature. Therein do observation, sympathy and surprise play the most important part. It would be a

reasonable supposition that after a time surprise gave place to speculation, and sympathy to study; while observation grew keener and closer. In the case of Sanskrit Literature at least this seems to be the fact. For, after the Vedic hymns, came the Upanisads and the Briahmaajas—one an outflow in speculation and the other an attempt at specialisation. Both, however, are still attempts to understand and interpret Life—life within and life without, the phenomena of living and growing human beings and the equally regular phenomena of seasonal life on the earth and of stellar life in the sky. Whether it is philosophy or ritualism does not matter for our purpose. It is sufficient (and it is true) to note that the Upanisads as well as the Brahmanas attempt to systematise the observations of Man and thus try to understand Man and his surroundings.

This process of systematisation culminated at a time known to scholars as the Sutra period. The Sanskrit word Sutra means an aphorism, wherein a mass of details is compressed within a minimum of words. Thus we find Sutras of Philosophy, of Interpretation, of Grammar, of Prosody, of Dialectics and so on. How was it possible to codify such vast and varied knowledge in so few words? There is only one intelligent attempt of understanding such a possibility; that is, by admitting the rise of technical words. Technical words are always words given a special power to convey a logically connected series of ideas, mental processes or material phenomena. It is quite likely that by the time of the Sutras there was a big list of such technical words. The process of coining such words was there quite early.[1] Specialisation and technical words go hand in hand. As illustrations of specialisation we have (1) Yaska's Nirukta of the 7th century B.C. which is a work on Etymology; and (2) the study of Mimansa which, in spite of its etymological sense, is a Science of Interpretation. The recognition of the six Vedangas probably synchronised with the attempts at specialisation.[2]. So we might conclude, in spite of the unfortunate lack of sufficient data, that what we now understand by scientific or technical study was current in India since soon after the Vedic hymns.

At this stage we come across the peculiar yet perpetual irony

1. Cf. The etymological attempts of the Brahmana texts.
2. Cf. The word Vedanga means a branch of Vedic study as the prosody, the ritualism, the glossary etc. of the Vedic hymns.

of the human mind. The human mind in its freshness is so interested in life and sets to study it; then it is so interested in the study itself that it makes life un-interesting. Specialisation has neither place in nor favour with human life. Human life is ever fresh. Specialisation is ever stale. It is for this reason that small connection indeed is found between scientific study and life, between technical literature and the tedium of life. It should not be supposed that technical study is entirely irrelevant in life. From our present point of view, however, technical study has no place in literature. The Sutra literature of the 6th century B.C. along with the earlier tendencies it represents, has nothing to convey of the life of the average man and has also no interest for the average man.

Side by side with the Sutras is to be found another form of literature which, in contrast to the technical, could be termed popular. The material available in this respect too is meagre : nevertheless the little that is known is genuinely illustrative and hence sufficient for the present purpose. The earliest that could be called popular without any hesitation is the epic literature viz. the two epics—the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. These two works are essentially narrative stories. The authors themselves reveal their intention of setting the narrative to recitation. Thus, the Mbh :—

idam sata-sahasram tu
sloksanam pupya-karmaajam
upakhyianaih saha jneyam
sravyam bharatam uttamam (I-i-77)

"Here are 100,000 verses describing meritorious (i.e. heroic) deeds; together with the legends therein, this work—the Bharata—**is the best to *be listened to"***

That these works were mainly intended for the populace is evident from many obvious circumstances. The benefits to the listeners as enumerated are too tempting. The contents too are tempting. Besides the material relevant to the story, could be found all that would appeal to the average mind and intellect. The commonplace of life is not excluded.[3] The style is simple and direct--direct in the sense of being less literary or artificial and more free or colloquial.

3. Cf. vakya-Jati-visesas ca loka-yatra-kramas ca yah "(Herein is to be found the interesting observation as well as the ways of the world)" Mbh. I-i-94.

That the epics form a landmark in the growth of Sanskrit Literature is but obvious. The amount of work done by scholars in this respect is eloquent enough. The point relevant here is different We are concerned not with what the epics achieved but with what they encouraged. With no amount of exaggeration it might be said that the Mahabharata first and the Ramayana next introduced a new vogue into Sanskrit Literature. What we now speak of as Literary Art in general could be said to have begun in India with the writing of the epics. What is interesting now and must have been no less than a miracle in those days is turning literature into an art. What with the Vedic sentiments growing dim, what with the mysteries invested and ascribed thereto by the Brahmanas, what with the esoteric speculations of the Upanisads and what with the stifling style of the Sutras, men must have welcomed, applauded, encouraged and been enraptured by literature like the epics which would flow in easy narration, would ebb with emotions and charm with music! The epics are such, describing the heroic deeds, the thrilling adventures and the noble efforts of warrior-princes. What would be more pleasing and more comfortable to a people living in mystic horror of powerful surroundings than Man depicted as a successful hero against all evil and inconvenient forces ? More pleasing still as the manner in which it was done, viz., by means of pithy, intelligible verses known as slokas.

That literature could be so stimulating and refreshing and fascinating was a new experience which was felt in all the first flush of enthusiasm. The post-epic works that have been retained for us through tradition are mostly works where literature is an art; wherein the purpose is more to enthral and to enrapture than to teach or to speculate. We shall find along this tradition some masters of letters who have successfully emulated the authors of the epics in blending Art with Life, Pleasure with Intelligence, Beauty with Morality, and Ecstasy with Divinity. Thinkers have thought, teachers have taught, and poets have sung not in the school-books of logic or rhyme but in artistic forms modelled on the epic. The one notable feature of the preserved post-epic literature is life through enjoyment and appreciation of Beauty or Harmony or whatever one would like to call the convenient and comfortable adjustment of man to his surroundings.

It should not be supposed that all this is a phantom raised by our own enthusiasm. Appreciation was quite early admitted as

a necessary faculty in study and culture. This statement could be well illustrated by a reference to Bharata's Natya-sastra. It matters little indeed to us whether Bharata is really the author, whether the Natya-Sastra belongs to the post-Christian or the pre-Christian era. We are concerned not with the thoughts of Bharata (or of the Naltya-gastra) but with the tendencies he (or it) represents. Bharata's treatment of this question presupposes that the subject has been under discussion a long time before; secondly, Bharata quotes the opinions of his predecessors. For this reason we feel justified in accepting the validity of Bharata's remarks with reference to the post-epic literary phenomena. Charm and appreciation, says Bharata, form the key-note of a literary piece. Nothing exists on excels without *rasa* (na hi rasadrte kas cid arthah pravartate, p. 71). That *rasa* includes among others the idea of charm and appreciation foremost is apparent from the analysis (N. S. chap. VI), that follows the above statement.

(i) In the first place, *rasa* is explained in general terms as follows :—

rasa iti kah padiarthab ? atra ucyate ;
asvadyatvat. Katham lasvadyo rasab ? atra ucyate;
Yatha hi nana-vyanjana-samskrtam annam bhunjana
rasan, asviadayanti sumanasah purusah hansadins
capi adhigacchanti tatha nanabhava-abhinaya-
vyanjitan vag-angasattvopetan sthayi-bhaavan
asvadayanti sumanasah preksakah.

" I shall tell you what rasa is and how it is enjoyed (i.e. experienced). In a meal consisting of various tastes and savours the diners are pleased with one feeling of pleasure arising from different causes. Likewise the audience would feel rapture through experience conveyed by emotions and movements."

(ii) Secondly the details of *rasa* experience are analysed as follows :—

A percept or a feeling depends on a stimulus. The stimulus is known as the vibhava. Response to a stimulus is two-fold, voluntary and involuntary; the involuntary or the immediate is physical or perceptible and is known as the anubhava; the voluntary or the mental is a reaction and is known as the vyabhidaribhava. The involuntary or the anubhava has a physical cause (i.e. is due to

a direct contact) and a mental effect as in the case of perspiring: through fear or of being thrilled by pleasant suddenness etc.; the voluntary or the vyabhicaribhava has a mental cause and physical effect as in the case of being tired or of feeling relaxed etc. A stimulus with this two-fold response means a complete experience or appreciation. To feel the bodily thrill and to be exhilarated at heart is the complete experience of beautiful in Nature; unless we do that we do not feel at home (to speak in prose fashion) or we do not lose ourselves (to speak the same poetically) in the beauty surrounding us. This state of losing oneself is known to-Bharata as the sthayi-bhiava (i.e. a state of unperturbed peace) and he says that the vibhava, the anubhava and the vyabhicaribhava merge into harmony or the sthayi-bhava. In other words when Bharata, says that *rasa* is the *sine qua nan* of a literary work he only means that the work would serve as a stimulus by experiencing which the reader or the spectator is appreciatingly charmed into a complete surrender. This view of Bharata was taken up later on by the rhetorician Anandavardhana who maintains that a Kavya or literary piece could be appreciated only by a *sahrdaya* ; the word " sahrdaya " he explains as follows :—

> yesam kavya-abhyasa-anusilana-vasad
> visadibhute mano-mukure vamaniyatanmayibhavana-
> yogyata te hrdayasamvadabhajah sahrdayah.

A *sahrdaya* is thus one whose mind and tastes are refined and who is sympathetic to the extent of losing himself in (i.e. identifying: with) the things experienced.

We are anticipating, however. All this discussion only shows that a time was when literary works were solely judged with reference-to charm and appreciation. And such a time, it is urged here, began with the epics.

The epics were important from another point of view too. They formed a charming recitation ; and recitation would be still more easy, convenient and charming if it were undertaken by those who were either gifted or trained for it. The popularity of the epics opened a great chance for such a class of reciters. In the epics themselves we have evidence to show that the work of training reciters came into existence soon after, if not simultaneously. The chief narrator in the present version of the Mbh. is Sauti, the son or descendant of Suta. The epic Ramayana was sung by Kuislavas

trained by the author—the sage Valmiki—himself. Suta, however, seems to be the earliest of a trained class of reciters. The Suta was probably a professional. In the Mbh., at the opening of the Astika Parvan, Sauti, says :—

itihasam imam viprah puranam paricaksate
krsna-dvaipayana-proktam naimisaranyavasisu
purvam pracoditah Sutah pita me Lomahansanah
tasmad aham upasrutya pravaksyami yathatatham.

" This legend is supposed to be very old ; it was narrated by Vyasa to the residents of the Naimisa forest; my father Lomaharsa-oa was first trained to recite it, and I shall narrate it just as I have learnt it from my father " (I-xiii-6-8).

This Suta, however, should be distinguished from the Magadha, a bard, who was also a reciter.[4] Though both were professional reciters the Magadha was a kind of " a Court bard " who recited mainly, if not only, the genealogy and the greatness of the king under whom he served. The Suta was a pauranika i.e. one who knew the whole traditional lore and was also a wandering minstrel. The style of the epics encouraged the growth and importance of the Suta class; and that class in its turn perpetuated the popularity of the epics.

Lastly, the epics fulfilled another function. By their fervour and popularity they not only directed but also restricted positively the course of subsequent literature to one, uniform channel. Most of the extant later Sanskrit works are modelled on the epics. It was only an accident that the bulk of the Mbh. prevented it from being a source of emulation while the Ramayana, written as it was round one hero and with no complications or digressions, formed the chief model; but if the Ramayana was the source of emulation the Mahabharata was as often the source of inspiration. In all this the later writers unfortunately miscalculated. At the time they wrote, the Sanskrit of the epics was further and further being removed from the contemporary form it had assumed in the meanwhile. A direct appeal to the reader was now out of question. So we find in all these later works—known as the classical Sanskrit Literature —a lack of the natural ease and charm and flow of the epics; secondly, a deliberate attempt to make up for that loss by artificial means like extravagance and ostentation.

4. Cf. in this connexion C.H.I. Vol. I, p. 130, 131, 257 & 297.

In spite of this incidental divergence, Classical Sanskrit Literature remained as near the epic models as possible. As time went on the Suta class disappeared and in its place are to be found the court poets combining in themselves the roles of both the Suta and the Magadha. The story of the Suta and the style of the Magadha are now to be found together. It is not intended here to convey that the whole of the Classical Sanskrit Literature is the* work of Court-poets. The petty princelings that came into existence after the disruption of the Mauryan Empire (2nd century BC.) had pleasure and satisfaction in listening to the unheard of and impracticable glories ascribed to themselves by a poet who would further attempt to trace the origin of his patron back to any of the epic heroes. Rivalry was one of the causes of the spread of such a class of literature. An accident of earlier vanity was accepted as a tradition in the later days till, in spite of the fact that Sanskrit was unpopular, i.e. unintelligible to the average reader, Sanskrit works were written in the epic style even as late as the 11th century A.D. ! (leave alone the later pedants). Indulgently nourished like a child of rich parents and denied the fresh air and the vigorous exercise in popular appreciation this class of Sanskrit Literature died an inevitable death. It died so miserable and wretched that no sane attempt has ever since been made to revive it.

CHAPTER II

FORM OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE

In the last chapter, we made a rapid survey of Sanskrit Literature in its broad relations to the tendencies of contemporary life. A natural expression of Life in the early Vedic days, Sanskrit literature plumed itself into an art, an expression of joy and beauty, and then, for various reasons, art decayed into artificiality, and died at last the inevitable death of an uncongenial, unnatural element.

To simplify the historical sketch no mention was made there of another factor; that is, the form of the Sanskrit Literature. By ' form' is meant the material aspect or what would be roughly distinguished as prose and poetry. The earliest Vedic hymns had a material form, divided into verses of two to four lines of an equal number of syllables. The language of the Vedic hymns was peculiar in one respect; it had a tone accent. This accent had a grammatical value inasmuch as it determined the position and the relation of the word in the sentence, and sometimes even the meaning of the word and so on. As a result, superficially, the chanting of the Vedic hymns had a musical effect.

After the four Vedas the accents with their; original significance are missed. Further, the form of the Brahmanic and the Upanisadic Literature differs on the whole from that of the hymns. It is *not metrical* Probably, the discursive nature of their contents compelled the authors of the Brahmanas and of the majority of the Upanisads to write in a prose style, while the descriptive nature of the Vedic hymns gave freer scope for metrical composition. The literature of the Black Yajurveda is the only earlier literature written in a prose style.[1] We have, as already mentioned, Yaska's Nirukta—a scientific work on Etymology—written in a prose style. The question of prose or poetry may not, after all, have been related to the discursive or the descriptive nature of the work concerned. That the question is, however, important for the present purpose will be seen presently.

Writing was not known before the 8th century B.C.[2] Even

1. C. H. I. Vol. I, p. 114.
2. Oxford History of India, pp. 27 and 136.

after it was introduced the difficulties involved, for want of other materials, were enough to dissuade even an enthusiast. So literature in those days must naturally have passed on orally. Even this oral " publication " entailed much labour and more difficulties. Common experience shows that poetry, with its fixed length and its equal number of syllables and its rhyme, is easier to be memorised than prose, which is more fluid. For this reason, the poetic i.e. the metrical style must have found more favour in those days. The only attempt to simplify the study of prose works was made in the Sutras but its very success scared the average reader away.

Here again the authors of the epics showed a shrewd foresight. With the boldness of a genius they faced the realities and with, the skill of an artist they gave them a form. The epic story in itself would have appealed to the readers but by utilising the metrical form for narration that appeal was made stronger and more lasting. Even the metre used was the simplest viz. the anustubh or the sloka with four feet of eight syllables.[3] The task was made easy both for the reciter and his audience. Thus, in the Mbh. the reciter Vaisampayana says :—

(i) sravyanam uttam cedam. "Most pleasing to listen to" (I-lxii-18).

(ii) (sravyam Sruti-sukham caiva. "To be recited and also listened to with pleasure," (ibid. 52).

(iii) Vistiryaitat mahad jnanam rsih samksipya cabravit | istam hi vidusam loke samasa-vyasa-dharanam, " This great lore has been narrated by the sage in brevity and at length ; what is more convenient to learners than to get knowledge in these two ways ? "

(iv) Alamkrtam subhaih sabdaih samayair divya-manusaih| chandovrttaisca vividhair anvitam vidusam priyam "Words are charming, situations both human and superhuman, rhymes and metres vary; so it (i.e. the epic) will charm the learned."

A thrilling narration, a simple metre, and musical variations. What wonder then that the epics should form the ideal of all future writers? Of the two, the Ramayana had the further advantage of being short

3. For a fuller discussion vide G. E. I., Chap. IV.

and compact, more systematic and more poetic; for this reason, the Ramayana was hailed as the adi-kavya or the first literary poem.

As a result of such circumstances poetic style became the vehicle of popular literature. Inthe early days of the epics it was only convenient to recite and easier to follow. But as time wore down the language of the epics to variations and modifications the advantage of the style diminished; and as writing came more and more into vogue the early advantage of a recitational style lost its force. But in spite of such changes in the language within and in the society without the post-epic poets copied the metrical model of the epics. Longer and more difficult metres were introduced. Narration too lost its simplicity and naturalness, and the poetic style that was once the magician's wand of a popular artist turned into the school-master's rod of a pedant. The music that touched the finer chords of human hearts turned to a drone that sent to sleep 'some self-centred petty prince or that pampered the pundits into drowsy applause.

It would be bold indeed on our part to insist that the post-epic Sanskrit Literature, blindly following the models, crashed headlong into decadence. Literature, after all, is the production of the poet and the artist. If literature is degraded it only means that it is in the hands of mere pretenders to literary laurels. The form of the epics was retained more because of what it had achieved in its own days than of what it was or would be achieving subsequently. That form had outlived its fresh appeal and its faithful art. The prose attempts of the earlier days culminated in the sutras developing a technology; thus they lost contemporary popular sympathy and ceased to represent popular life. Likewise, soon enough, the epic style too developed into a science with a technology[4] ; and thus restricted it too lost the general sympathy and ceased to represent contemporary social activities and ambitions. Nothing could illustrate this remark better than a casual observation of the monotonous,

4. By the 8th century A.D. we come across works, supposedly on Rhetorics or literary criticism. It is a pitiful sight of intelligent writers and thinkers wasting themselves on the details of what a hero must be like in a Kavya, how the Kavya should begin and how it should end, what things are to be described therein and in what sequence and such superficial points *ad museum*. Though these works do not appear till the 8th century the views therein were probably being formed a long time before.

the rule-bound form of the Kavya that' repeated itself through different ages and with different poets. We might take any Kavya —say the Buddhacarita of Asvaghosa, one of the earliest of the Classical period and compare it with any one of the latest—say the Jianakiharana of Kumaradasa of Ceylon; we will find that essentially there is no difference in the form and the treatment—an identical beginning, the same arrangement of (oftentimes the same) ideas, facts and fancies and figures of the same tone and touch and so on! There is nothing like a development; on the other hand, there is a desperate attempt, naturally doomed to failure, to preserve the epic model.

It is relieving, however, to find that imitation is not the only contribution of the post-epic period. Every generation has its own ideas and its own ways of expression. The ideas may be based on or borrowed from those of the previous generation, still they appear new either because the generation is new or because the mode of expression is different. The Vedic seers composed their hymns ; their descendants expressed same or similar ideas but in a different style (i.e. a different point of view) ; in the epic days the same ideas were arranged in a peculiar form and expressed in a fresh style; and similarly, the post-epic period introduced, beside the epic, a literary style of their own where the old, old materials were arranged in a new fashion. It should be further noted that almost all the Great Sanskrit writers after the epic have subscribed to this new form, testifying at once to the greatness of their own powers and the freshness of the latest style. That style is the form found in Sanskrit dramas.

Superficially speaking, the form of Sanskrit dramas is not quite new or original. Instead of the purely prose or the purely poetic style of earlier works, these dramas were written partly in prose and partly in verse. Secondly, the purpose of the epic viz., to turn literature into art—a path of roses to charm and appreciation of joy and Beauty—this purpose, was carried into the dramas. What is the artistic purpose or effect of a drama? Bharata, in his Natya-Sastra, gives a frank reply to this question.

dubkhartanam sramartanam Sokartanam tapasvinam
visrsma-jananam loke natyam etad bhavisyati;
vinoda-jananam kale natyam etad bhavisyati;

" Drama shall be a comfort, an amusement and a refreshment to all

those that are grieved, miserable or weary " (1-111 b, 112 a, 117 a). So does Kalidasa, himself a great dramatist, answer this question.

natyam bhinna-rucer janasya bahudha'pyekam samaradhanam
•'Drama, thought of various types, is an entertainment common to people of different tastes." (Mai. I. 4).

Bhavabhuti, another great playwright of later days, is still more explicit on this point:

bhumna rasanam gahanafo prayogah
sauharda-hr-dyani vicestitani
auddhatyam ayojita-kamasutram
cirah katha vaci vidagdhata ca.

" Sentiments are depicted in all their subtlety ; the actions are charming and reasonable; there is sense and dignity; the plot is unusual and the dialogue skilful. (Such plays alone are considered good. MM. 1-6)" The protestations of Bhavabhuti are echoed by a later writer on dramaturgy viz., Dhananjaya the author of Dasaitupaka. Drama, to him, is no class-room moral lesson :

ananda-nisyandisu rupakesu
vyutpatti-matram phalam alpabuddhih
yo'pitihasdivad aha Sadhuh
tasmai namah svasduparanmukhaya

" Dramatic representations are the pure expressions of Joy; the innocent fool who believes that Drama, like the study of Itihasa and others, improves only the intellectual outlook, has no sense of Beauty or Enjoyment." (D. R. 1.6). Instances might be multiplied to show that enjoyment i.e. charm and appreciation formed the foremost feature of dramas. The idea of charm and appreciation, as explained above, was first put into practice by the authors of the epics,

Sanskrit dramas copied the epics in another respect The outstanding features of the epic style were narration and description. The stories of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are more human in outlook and treatment compared with the mythology of the Vedic hymns or with the Upanisadic discussions. This introduction of life-like incidents and emotions was retained *in* the dramas in only as far as borrowing their plots from or modelling them upon those in the epics. More will be said on this feature in another place- Here

it is mentioned as a sufficient reason to show how classical Sanskrit dramas are indebted to the epics. The indebtedness is so close that when after a time, the Natya-Sstra is written, the author boasts therein of drama in the same tones in which the Mbh. boasts of itself. Bharata says :— *

na taj jnanam na tacchilpam na sa vidya na sa kala
na sa yogo na tat karma natye'smin yan na drSyate ;
sarvaisastrani silpani karmani vividhani ca;
veda-vidyetihasanam akhyBnaparikalpanam;

"There is no knowledge, no fine art, no learning, no skill, no yoga and no activity that is not represented in Drama. (Here are) all the (Sastras, all the fine arts and actions of diverse nature. . . . . .In Drama: are narrated and represented all the Vedic and all the traditional or legendary lore" (I. 114, 112b; 116b).[5] Just as Vyasa wrote the Mbh. and trained his disciples to recite it, so did Bharata :

akhyapito viditvia'ham natyavedam pitamahat
putran adhyiapayam yogyan prayogam casya tattvatah

" I learnt this Veda of Dramaturgy from God Brahman and then I taught my sons ((or disciples) both its theory and its practice" (I. 25),

Thus we see that most of the original features of the epic style are borrowed by the Drama literature. That the Drama should also borrow the tendency to claim a hoary tradition and a perfection in the same tones as the epic is eloquent enough. But that is only half the truth; the other half is more important, more enlightening and also more refreshing—as it reveals some new features into literature for the first time. Though they form the subject of a detailed study later, just one or two of them would be considered here.

The most important and the original feature is the introduction of the Prakrts. Those who have a historical knowledge of the linguistic development of Sanskrit might question the originality of this feature. Most of the Prakrts were, at one time—probably *after the epics,* spoken dialects. To write in a style nearer the spoken one was first attempted by the epics. So why should not one say

5. cf. the famous line in the Mbh.
yad ihasti tad anyatra yan nehasti na tat kvacit
" What is here is elsewhere, what is not here cannot be found elsewhere."

that even the introduction of the Prakrts was just a tendency borrowed from the epics? Why not indeed? But the difficulty lies in taking the Prakrt passages of the available plays as genuine specimens of actually spoken dialects. Originality in this respect concerns more with the boldness of placing these dialects side by side with the sacred tongue. The two Sanskrit authorities *on* Dramaturgy have recognised the importance of this innovation. Thus Bharata :—

natya-yoge tu kartavyam Kavyam bhasasamSrayam.

" In a play staged the composition should be based on the ***local dialects-"*** **(XVIII-43).**

The DaSarupaka, too, is equally insistent. (11-63)
desa bhana-a-kriya-vesa-laksanah syuh pravrttayah
lokad evdhigamyaitah yathaucityam prayojayet

" In all the productions dress, actions and speech should be taken directly from the Society and should be properly observed."

It would not be unreasonable, therefore, to believe that the introduction of the Prakrts was an innovation of the post-epic period.

Another important feature of the Drama literature—a feature which is new and original—is the " humanising " tendency. Though the epics had made literature a source of pleasure and interest to the average readers, their success was due more to the style than to the treatment. The story itself was still fantastic; the characters therein were super-human heroes, semi-divine beings, or demons of evil and darkness. This element of "super-naturalism" of the heroic age was retained by the later Kavya works and to appreciable extent even by the Drama literature. But side by side developed a tendency of turning literature from a mere luxury to a light on life. The ordinary beings with the fun and pain, the ideas and idiosyncrasies, the humours and habits of routine life were utilised by the dramatic artists. Literature was here " democratised "— so to say. No evidence would be more convincing than the mention of the fact that prakarana—such was the name of one of the earliest forms in Dramatic literature. Let Bharata himself explain what a prakarana is (N. S. XX) :—

yatra kaviratma-buddhya vastu Sariram ca natakam caiva
autpattikam prakurute prakararnam etad budhair jfieyam (49).
vipra-vanik-sacivanam purohitamatya-sarthavahanam
caritam yad anekavidham tad jneyam prakaranam nama. (52)

nodattanayakakrtam na divyacaritam na rajasambhogam
bahya-jana-samprayuktam vijneyam prakaranam tajnaih. (53).
sacivan-Sree-brahmana
grhavarta yatra bhavet. (55)-

" Let the wise people know that a prakarana is an original production of a poet dealing with the varied life-story of Brahmins, tradesmen, ambassadors, purohits, ministers, merchants, etc. No kings, no super-human incidents, no heroes of an exalted type to be found here. Let the wise know that a prakarania deals with the routine ((domestic aspects of an ordinary (bahyajana) human being." Dasarupaka, more or less, repeats these ideas (D. R. HI 39), and Visvaniatha, too, in his Sahitya Darpana summarises the same views (S D. VI 224). All this is sufficient to show that prakarana was a piece built up by the author's imagination but based on or related to the incidents in the life of an average man; no extraordinary situations, no super-human deeds, no exalted powers. Some Sanskrit prakarans like Sudraka's Mrcchakaitika or Bhavabhuti's Malatir Madhava may not be all we desire when a play is based on actual social life. What is important is the tendency to bring literature nearer and nearer to everyday life.

We are now in a position to summarise the main tendencies of literary development in Sanskrit. In the Vedic days hymns were sung in honour of baffling super-human elements. The feeling behind and the fervour in these hymns were shared by that primitive society as a whole. The rich fancy of the hymns fascinated many a generation following, with the result that that fancy was studied at one time and emulated at another. But that feeling and that fervour were now neither fresh nor popular; so the study in the Brahmajnas and the emulation of the Upanisads assumed aristocratic airs and, like any aristocracy, were out of touch with popular life. The Aryans as a people were still pushing far and wide over India, their life was still adventurous. That adventurous life was represented in the epics, a glorious life set to enchanting music. The result was so successful that the epics served as literary models for a *long* time to come, extending even to the times when the very life of the epic days loomed past and fantastic. The last stage of our survey covers a field where the epic style was not merely modelled upon but modified to an advantage. That is the field of Dramatic literature.

So far the survey reads like one story. But so many objections can be legitimately directed against it. Can the literary development be traced along the lines suggested above? Can it be shown that the Drama literature coines after the epics and *not at all* before? Were there no dramas before the epics? Questions like these will have to be answered throughout the present work. The question that would face us first is that of the origin of Sanskrit Drama. An answer to that question would meet many of the above and similar objections. So to that question of the origin of Sanskrit Drama we shall now turn.

CHAPTER III

ORIGIN OF SANSKRIT DRAMA

(Traditional)

To the Hindu mind everything except God and the world (sairhsiara), has a beginning. Moreover, the beginning of anything is supposed to be known as certain only when it is traced to God Himself. So we find the Natyasastra—the scientific treatise on Drama and Dramaturgy, traced traditionally to Brahma, the All-Creator. We may be annoyed at such an irresponsible attitude of facetiously tracing all things to God—we may be annoyed but we cannot complain. In one respect, these ancient Indian scholars (called |rsis then) have an advantage over the modern Sanskrit scholars. In explaining any phenomenon by tracing it to God the old sages enunciated a theory or an outlook which has been at least silently acquiesced in ; while the modern scholars, in tracing any and every feature of Sanskrit Literature to and from the Vedic period, are only raising a dust-storm of doubt and indecision. The traditional account, as will be presently shown, has a style of its own, to understand which one has to interpret.

To Bharata Drama has two beginnings, one in the divine and the other in the mortal world. Moreover, as the treatise deals *with drama on the stage,* the origin of Drama means to him the *first performance of the first drama.* The history of this performance, as described in the opening chapters of the NatyaSastra, hence deserves a full summary.

In the old, old days, when the inhabitants of Jambudvipa lived a life not quite a reputable one (gramyadharma-pravrtte) when towns flourished along with their quarrels and their jealousies (kamalobha-vasam-gate) and when luck and lust were rife, Indra and other Gods went in deputation to God Brahma. The good ways of the old world were discredited. To improve the world and its ways they wanted simpler and pleasanter methods. The number of Sudras, low-caste people, had increased. A sudra had no rightful access to the sacred lore or the Vedas. So the Vedas were now

1. N. S. L 9.

not at all helpful. Why should not Brahma create a fifth Veda that would be accessible to all, irrespective of their caste-distinctions? (Sarva-varnikam)[2]. Brahma consented. He made an easy and skilful job of it. With the existing four Vedas as his materials he created the Natya—wherein the text was taken from the Rgveda, the music from the samaveda, the action from the Yajurveda and the rasa from the Atharvan.[3] It was a silent revolution and was acceptable to both the old and the new worlds. This piece, called itihasa, Indra was asked to produce. Indra, however, pleaded his inability. " Sire, the Gods are not able to understand, execute and express this lore ; the Gods are not at all suited for Drama."[4] Thereupon the sage Bharata was entrusted with that task. Bharata soon showed that he deserved this divine compliment. Bharata was a man with a shrewd insight and a practical sense. He had the further advantage of being the father of hundred sons[5] whom he could "coach up " with all paternal rigour. But soon he found out that he had *to* include some ladies as certain parts were impossible to be played by men.[6] The wise sage did not flinch. On his request Brahmla supplied Apsaras damsels.[7] Then the heavenly musicians, like Narada and others were assembled. The play to be produced was "The Defeat of the Demons." Naturally, the demons took strong objection to it and were wroth that Brahma should license such a performance likely to disturb the peace of the citizens. The "open fields" (dhvajamaha)[8] of Indra made it easy for the opponents to attack and prevent the production. In the interests of safety, it was found that a play-house well protected by walls on all sides was essential.[9] Later on, the demons were pacified by Brahma who explained to them the nature as well as the purpose and functions of Drama. Here are the eloquent words in which Brahma pleaded the greatness of Drama.

"Why are you so displeased, my demon friends? I have created this Niatyaveda so that there would be a better mutual under-

2. N. S. 1-17.
3. *Ibid.* 1-17.
4. *Ibid.* 1-22.
5. *Ibid.* 1-24-41.
6. *Ibid.* 1-46.
7. *Ibid.*, I. 48-50.
8. *Ibid.* I. 55.
9. *Ibid.* I. 79-80.

standing (karmabhavianvayapekso) between you and the Gods. It is not a piece of propaganda of any one section. The three worlds shall be described here. There is religion for those who are religious minded, love for those that are amorous minded, knowledge for the ignorant, criticism of the learned, a delight to the Gods and a solace to the afflicted. In short, every one will find in Drama just what he needs and what is good for him. It preaches yet delights, it recreates yet it is reasonable, it teaches and yet is broad-minded. Where else could you find reason with recreation, knowledge with attraction, and morality with beauty ? "[10] The demons must have been men with hearts. They were not only pacified but entirely satisfied.

Chapter II of the N. S. can be passed over in this connection as it merely describes the erection and the details of the natyavesma —or the play-house.[11] In the new play-house Bharata went through all the preliminary ceremonies (III). By this time the sage had grown wiser by experience and did not revive "the Defeat of the Demons." With his band of actors he waited on Brahma to receive orders as to which play was to be staged. It was decided to play the "samavakara" performance named "The Nectar Churning" (amrta-manthana).[12] Brahma was so pleased that he volunteered to introduce the company to God Siva, and in the presence of the latter a " dima " performance, by name " the Burning of the Three Forts" (tripura-diaha), was given. God Siva too commended the actors whom he found promising and, to make the performance better, he undertook the task of personally supervising and introducing dance and music into the show.[13]

Thus does Bharata describe, at length and in rapture, the first dramatic production under his management. This account has mystified many scholars, and many more were justified under the circumstances to dismiss the whole narration as of no historical value. One is rather surprised to find that these scholars should insist that history ought to have been written, in those earlier days, in the same style as in the modern days. With a little more patience and a more accurate analysis it will be seen that Bharata is not as fantastic as

10. *Ibid.* I. 102-118.

11. For a fuller interpretation of these Chapters see Chapter; XX of this work.

12..-IS. IV. 1-4. ,

13. *Ibid.* IV. 10-15.

he appears to be. Let us only remember that the two first performances are known as " samavaksara " and " dima."

The *samavakra* is Refined[14] as follows :—

devasurabija krtam prakhyatodatta-nayakam caiva

"" A representation wherein the hero is well known and highly placed, where the story develops on the fight between the Gods and the demons."

What is important from our point of view is the fact that the story *represents* a *fight.* How was this fight represented on the stage ? The answer to this question is given by Bharata himself in another connexion[15]. Brahma, the sponsor of Drama was watching a fight between God Krs|na and two demons, Madhu and Kaitabha. This fight was fought out by Krsa successfully but, stranger to say, the success owed itself to Brahma's directions. The various postures and methods into which the fight developed appealed to Brahma from an artistic point of view. He was so pleased with the whole show that he immediately set to introduce those postures and methods into his pet fancy viz., the natya or drama. Ultimately he did so in the form of the four vrttis or styles. What are these vrttis ? Are they the different methods of representation or are they merely methods under different circumstances? An analysis of the description of these four vrttis might help us to answer this question.

(i) First is the Bharati vjtti taken from the Rgveda[16]. It is defined as :—

ya vak-pradhana purusa-prayojya
stri-varjitja sanskrta-viakya-yukta
svanamadheyair bharataih prayukta
sa bharati nlama bhavet tu vrttih[17]

" It consists of mere speeches or recitation and is only played by men. There are to be no ladies at all. The language here is Sanskrit and the actors represent it under their own names." Here there is no representation, so to say. There are no "made-up" roles as the (supposed) actors are to speak and act under their own

14. *Ibid.* XX. 66.
15. *Ibid.* XXII. 1-22.
16. *Ibid.* XXII. 24.
17. *Ibid.* XXII. 25.

names. It is merely recitational, since it is taken from the Rg-Vedic hymns. And there was no place for ladies at all.

(ii) Next comes the Satvati vrtti.

viagabhinayavati sattvotthlana-vacana-prakararanesu
sattvadhikarayukta vijneya satvati vittih.[18]

" Whenever there is an emotional context, it is accompanied by speech, and acting ; if, in addition, there is an abundance of "sattva" it is the Satvati vrtti," What " Sattva " is, is explained by Bharata in another place[19] It is defined as :

avyakta-rupam sattvam hi jneyam bhavarasasrayam
yathasthana-rasopetam romancasradibhir gunaii.

" It is something subtle and clever on which depends the proper representation of sentiments and feelings" i.e. where there is "acting" as we know it. This vrtti is apparently taken from the Yajurveda. Here there is recitation as well as acting. As the author speaks of rasa, it is probable that the actors were expected to reveal the supposed effects of the actions by tears etc.

(iii) The third vrtti is the Kaisiki.

ya slaksa-nepathya-visesa-citra
stri-samyuta ya bahu-nrtta-gita
kamopabhoga-prabhavopacarS
tarn kaisikim vrttim udaharanti.[20]

" There are females in the representation, plenty of music and dance,. representation of love-affairs, and lastly there is beautiful ' dressing-up' slaksna-nepathyavisesa-citra)." Three points in this definition deserve to be noticed ; (a) presence of actress, (b) dance and music, and (c) impersonation. The first two are closely related to each other; nay, it appears each is essential for the other. For, in the very first chapter, Bharata says :—

kaisiki slais)na-nepathya srigara-rasa-sambhava
asakya purusaib sadhu prayoktum strijanad rte.[21]

18. *Ibid.* XXII. 39.
19. *Ibid.* XXIV 3.
20. *Ibid.* XXII 47.
21. *Ibid.,* XXII 57.

" The Kaisiki dealing with Love and requiring beautiful dressing is. impossible to be staged by men, without women." 1-46.

(iv) The last vrtt is the Arabhati.

prastava-pata-pluta-langhitiam
canyiani mayikrtam indrajalam
citrani yuktani ca yatra nityam
tarn tadrsm arabhatim vadanti.

" Where there are various kinds of music, flight, dance, magic etc. represented regularly." It should be noted that herein we find some permanent setting (yatra nityam) i.e. some sort of stage equipment which would help an honest representation of the various actions.

Without going into further details the four vrttis might be summarised as under :—

(i) Bharati or purely recitational.

(ii) Satvatl or recitation and acting.

(iii) Kaisiki or impersonation with music and dance, and

(iv) Arabhati or a true-to-life representation on an equipped stage.

If we remember that during Kpaoa's fight with the demons Brahma observed the four vrttis in the same order as mentioned so far and introduced them likewise in the natya, would we not be justified in believing that the four vrttis are not merely four varieties of representation but a progressive chain in four stages ? Does not the opening account of Bharata, as described above, bear out this belief ? The first performance was a Samavakara, named " The Nectar-churning." It must have been a pure recitation, a description with probably no device to represent the action.

Dima.

The second performance was a *dima* which has been defined as one where the story and the hero are well known.

mayendra-jala-bahulo bahu-purusotthiana-bhedasamyuktali.
devusura-rakasa-bhuta-yaksa-nagas ca purusah syuh.[22]

22. *Ibid.* XX. 91.

" Where there is a great number of male characters and a good deal of make-believe" etc The " make-believe" is probably the *vagangabhinaya* i.e. the bodily movements of the Satvati vrtti. Without repeating, one thing has to be naturally insisted upon here. The information of the NatyajSastra may not contain facts, but there is no harm (why, there is more reason) in believing that the work, at the worst, attempts to preserve a tradition. In doing this, it •describes the different trends in the development of Drama as a representation. Its vocabulary and its technique of description are peculiar to the age. The treatise might be one fairly late. But would that fact alone be a sufficient argument to show that even the tendencies and the tradition preserved therein belong to the latest age?

There is another reason in not disbelieving the above account *so* hastily. A critical arrangement and a reasonable interpretation of the facts would reveal some interesting points. To those we shall now turn. To render the discussion more intelligible, we shall first mention the three points that emerge from the traditional account.

(i) The credit for the first production of a dramatic representation belongs to one Bharata ;

(ii) A consistent attempt has been made throughout to establish a connexion between the natya and the four Vedas ; and

(iii) with reference to the Bharati vrtti, a probable evolution from dumb show to a dramatic representation has been hinted at.

We shall now consider these points one by one.

CHAPTER IV

WHO IS BHARATA?

Bharata, tradition tells us, is the originator of Drama. He is the Prometheus of the Drama world. Like so many other men of genius of the primitive days, Bharata is placed behind a mist-like halo. The difficulty is not so much in finding out when and where Bharata lived as in acknowledging that he was a real, living person. Bharata is a name well known to the Hindu tradition. In the Vedic days, Bharata was a name of one of the Vedic tribes. Secondly, " Bharata " was supposed to be the name of a king (son of Sakuntala and Du§yanta) who became the first Emperor (Sarvabhauma). Thirdly, " Bharata" is the name of a sage, the traditional author of the Naityasastra (not to be confused with the originator of Dramatic Representation). And lastly in the N. S. itself the word "bharata" is used in the sense of "an actor."

Under these circumstances it is not easy to determine who the Bharata, mentioned in connection with the Natyasastra, is. The first two meanings viz., that of "a tribe" and that of "the name of a king" have been entirely ruled out by scholars : as regards the others, scholars have not been able to determine (i) whether Bharata was a mystical sage postulated by the actors themselves, who were called "bharata" and/or (ii) whether Bharata was a real person in honour of whose initiative enterprise the actors were called "bharata"s.[1]

That the insistence of scholars is not so well placed will be noticed on a closer examination of the facts. Why should the word " bharata " mean a sage or an actor when neither sense would suit the context ? That neither, of the meanings suits the context is plain enough. That a mythical sage should write the Natyai§astra does not appeal to a reasonable mind; that actor or actors should write it does not answer the common sense point of view. Besides, the other meanings of that word do not seem to have been carefully considered.

1. cf. "The treatise which goes by his (Bharata's) name is very prolix and may be an amplification of the Bharata sutras which are lost. It is to these sutras or stage directions for the use of bharatas or actors "that Bharata owes his imaginary existence" *Ind. Theatre,* p. 30.

" Bharata ", as mentioned above, is the name of a Vedic tribe. In the N. S. itself, the bharatas are referred to collectively, as the sons of Bharata.[2] The literary tradition of the Vedic Aryans is the first reason for such a belief. We know how the authorship of the various Vedic hymns and maindalas had been ascribed to a family, a clan and so on, but least to one individual.[3] The mandala VII of the R. V., for example, claims the authorship of the Vasisthas i.e. of persons whose family name was Vasistha. Similarly, could not the Bharata of the Natyasastra be a family and not an individual ? As a matter of fact, in N. S. I are mentioned the hundred sons of Bharata and they are mentioned again in N. S. XXXVI.

On this supposition much of the traditional account could be reasonably explained. At the beginning it was the Bharata family that was responsible for first introducing the art of dramatic representation. As belonging to the Vedic Aryans it was a family of talents and tradition. A time came, however, when the Bharata family lost its prestige and powers and privileges. Nowhere is it so difficult to continue the family traditions as in arts of instinct. Owing to the questionable attitudes and behaviour of Bharata's sons the very art was threatened with destruction.[4] Luckily for Bharata, a king by name Nahu$a came into power over the divine kingdom. This Nahusa patronised Bharata and his sons, and Drama has been firmly established ever since.

The above narration is highly instructive. In the first place, it gives us an idea about a family known as Bharata. This family must have been highly cultured, intelligent and respectable.[5] The fact that other vedic sages cursed the misbehaving sons of Bharata suggests that that; was a vedic family.[6] How sincerely pained must have been these other vedic families when they found a family of their own blood and traditions resorting to vulgar ways like dancing and singing—not in honour of the Gods but to please a vulgar crowd! It is curious that a votary of Dramatic Art should be held in contempt and derision in all climes and at all times. Is it a universal conspiracy of dull minds against daring, of slovenly self-decep-

2. N. S. I. 26-36, XXXVI, 29.
3. C H. 9. Vol. I, p. 77.
4. For further details in this connexion see and compare the account in the next chapter.
5. Cf. N. S. I. 22.
6. Cf. *Ibid*. XXXVI 33-35 and the next Chapter of this work.

tion against searching self-knowledge, of instinctive animal spirits against inspired art ? If we mention that as late as the XVI century, and in a country where Shakespeare was still living, actors were classed as vagabonds it is only to illustrate a universal tendency. In India, too, from the very early times there is evidence to show a similar state of affairs. In one of the earliest treatises on sociology and politics viz., the ArthaisSstra ascribed to Kaultilya " singing and dancing " are mentioned among the duties of a iSudra.[7] Similarly, according to the sage Manu a man conversing with another man's wife commits an offence and is liable to a fine; but there is an exception. Any one can talk with an actor's wife and no offence is committed ! Actors and their wives are so immoral that the question of their'moral sentiments being offended does not arise at all.

naiva cara|na-daresu vidhir natmopajivi§u
sajjayanti hi te narir niguidhas darayanti te.[8]

"This law does not refer to the wives of actors or to those that maintain themselves by selling their body. They are procurers and work in secrecy.[9]

The higher in art, the lower in life—has been the thumb-and-rule dictum of Society ; and the Vedic sages had every human reason to be enraged with Bharata and his sons. The consequence could be easily anticipated. The Bharatas should either recant or should forfeit their Vedic prestige and privileges. Luckily for their art the Bharatas were unrepentant. They chose to leave the neighbourhood of their Vedic brethren. They suffered not for this love of their art, for soon enough the royal patronage of Nahusa was extended to them. Who is this Nahuisa ? We do not know for certain. What we *do* know is that from the Vedic days he is a sore to the eyes of the Aryans. He is the fiend whom Indra, the beloved hero of the Vedic tribes, attacks.

sa nrtamo nrhuso armat-sujataa?
puro abhinat arhan dasyu~hatye.

7. Sudrasya dvijatiSurusa varta karu-kuSlava karma ca. Prakaraaja I, Chap. iii.

8. M. S. VIII. 362.

9. "Carana" mentioned in this verse—has the highest status in the dramatic world as a singer and a dancer, na hi caryia virta kincinnatye hyangam pravartate—without dance, says Bharata the dramatic art cannot exist. N. S. XI 6.

" Strong, glorious, manliest, for us he shattered the forts of Nahusa,, when he slew the Dasyus ",[10]

This Nahusa may be an individual or, for all we know, that word may be the name or nickname of a non-Aryan tribe. That the sage,Agastya had a feud with Nahu§a shows that the locality of the latter was somewhere about the Vindhya range of mountains.[11] The Bharata tribe from the Vedic days! wandered, now in power, now in obscurity from the Punjab to the Kurukisetra! where their eastward migration was obstructed by the Kurus, and then from Kuruksetra probably south-west (through the modern Rajputana) to Vindhya[12] where it earned the favour of the non-Aryan Nahusa.

To return to the word " bharata." From the foregoing it seems reasonable to believe that the Bharata mentioned in connexion with the Natyasastra is the name of a Vedic tribe. But there are passages in the NatyaSaistra where the word "bharata" is used not merely in the sense of a family name or in the sense of the family-members (which naturally came to mean "actors") but in a still wider significance. " Now " says Bharata[13] " I shall mention the list of bharatas. The scene-setter, the dusaka (Vidusaka?), the musician, the dancer, the stage-manager, the producer, the dresser, the florist, the painter, the washerman, the artisans etc.—these are all bharatas since they supply (Skt. root *bhj-)* the various materials required for a performance."

A careful perusal of these passages would reveal the fact that a bharata (or a bharata XXXV 69) is not so much an actor as one of the Managers or workers of the whole show from erecting a stage to the stage-worship just before a play begins. No other sense could be more suitable since Bharata and his family were not actors but managers and producers.[14]

10. R. V. X 99 vii (Griffith's translation). For some other details see the following chapter of this work.

11. For the locality of Agastya and his feud with Nahusa, see Mbh. Adiparvan, Chapter 94, 102, 157 and 207.

12. C. H. I. Vol. I. p. 188.

13. N. S. XXXV 66-69.

14. Note in this connection that in some later plays like the Veajl-samhra and Prasanna-Raghava the Sutradhara is addressed as " bharata " in the prologue.

Thus the word *bharata* in the NatyaSastra refers in the first instance to some members and descendants of a clan or family of that name. This family was the first sponsor and manager of Dramatic Representation?' Either the family heritage was lost or the family ceased, for reasons suggested above, to be recognised as a family. After some time *bharata* meant anyone and everyone who sponsored the art and managed or took part in the production.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION AND DRAMA

The meaning of the word " bharata " as decided in the preceding chapter raises some very inconvenient problems. Those scholars who see in Bharata—the supposed author of the N. S.—only a mythical being easily dismiss the claim of that treatise to any authoritativeness. Hence, according to them, the origin of Dramatic Representation as narrated in the N. S. is a further myth woven round the name of the mythical Bharata. On the other hand, those scholars have their own theory about the origin of Sanskrit Drama—a theory which is free from any mention of Bharata. The origin of Sanskrit Drama, they say, is to be sought in the primitive religious rites. With the progress of research work this theory has been slightly modified. The older theory traces the origin definitely to the Vedic religious performances. " The lack of accurate data precludes our knowing much about the origin of the drama in India, but it is probable that it had its beginning in a combination of these hymns in a dramatic and *in* the religious dances, in which certain pantomimic features came to be conventionalized and stereotyped in later times until we get the classical Sanskrit Drama. This theory is borne out by the fact that in Sanskrit the words for play (nataka) and actor (nata) are from the root *not,* which is the Prakrt form of Sanskrit *nrt*—to dance. " As a corollary to this theory arose that of the probable borrowing of the Drama form in India from the Greeks with whom Drama definitely evolved out of the religious rites.[2]

A modified version of the above theory is proposed by Professor A. B. Keith. The phrase " Sanskrit Drama," he insists, should be

1. Bib. Skt. Drama 1906, Intro, p. 1. Also cf. " The *soma* sacrifice which gave rise to Mapiala IX of the Rgveda is also associated with the oldest prahasanas. They were boisterous farces, rough and gruff like the rumbling and grumbling thunderstorm." *The Ind, Theatre,* op. cit. p. 173, footnote.

"The earliest specimens of Bhanas in Sanskrit literature are monologues of a ruined gambler R. V. X. 34 and of *Drunken Indra* " *ibid.,* p. 175 footnote.

2. Brit. Drama, p. 15.

understood only in the sense of a conscious representation on an equipped stage. From this point of view, to quote the learned scholar *at* length, " when we leave out of account the enigmatic dialogues of the Rgveda we can see tat the Vedic ritual contained within itself the germs of drama, *as is the case with practically every form of primitive worship.* The ritual did not consist merely of the singing of songs or recitations in honour to the Gods; it involved a complex round of ceremonies in some of which there was undoubtedly present the element of dramatic representation, i.e., the performances of the rites assumed for the time being personalities others than their own."[3] " On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that it was through the use of the epic recitations that the latent possibilities of drama were evoked and the literary form created." [4] On these views the writer concludes that Sanskrit Drama originated with the Krsna legends during the second century B.C.[5]

All this would tempt one to believe that the origin of Sanskrit Drama ultimately goes back to religious performances, Vedic or epic. The views of these profound scholars cannot be easily dismissed— not even on the ground that as foreigners they do not always have first-hand knowledge and experience of Hindu tradition and mentality. The attempt to connect Sanskrit Drama with some or other aspect of the Vedic life or literature is not quite foreign in its origin. Even Bharata, as explained in the last chapter, mentions that the N. S. was created as the fifth Veda ; that the text was taken from R. V., the music from the S. V., the action from the Y. V. and the rasa from the A. V. Secondly in connection with the rise of the four *vrttis* (NS. XX) the fight of Krsna with the demons Madhu and Kaitabha is mentioned as the source. Thus on authorities Indian and European, it appears as if the question of the origin of Sanskrit Drama is settled once for all. It would have been, were certain doubts removed by the proposed vedic or epic religious origin. In the first place, the mere mention of the N. S. as the fifth Veda or of the fact that the elements of drama were taken out of the four vedas is of no importance in itself. It has been the age-long tendency of the Hindu mind to trace back everything to the Vedas. Just as a Hindu king would be satisfied to learn that the blood in his veins

3. Skt. Drama, p. 23, Italics ours.
4. *Ibid*. p. 27.
5. *Ibid*. p. 45.

has flown direct from a vedic personage so the average Hindu has satisfaction to know that the beliefs and actions of his are exactly those mentioned in the Vedas. Every new school of thought in India has striven to claim and establish for itself the sanction of the vedic texts. So a statement of the kind under question is more a tribute to the sanctity and hold of the Vedas than a reference to a fact.

The Western scholars are on another plane. The facts mentioned by them are usuially unquestionable, but oftentimes the conclusions reached by them would not accord with the facts. Though such latter cases are very few indeed, the origin of Sanskrit Drama is one of them; though best-equipped to know the facts it is most natural for these scholars to ignore the feelings behind them. Thus a connection between religious performances and dramatic representation is a probability to them not because there are all the stronger reasons for it in India, but that such has been the case in civilisations more intimately connected with their own. In Greece, for example, " both comedy and tragedy took their rise from religious ceremonial .... From a common chant the ceremonial soon developed into a primitive *duologue* between a leader and the chorus. The song became elaborated; it developed narrative elements and soon reached a stage in which the duologue told in primitive wise some story of the deity."[5] Similar circumstances obtained even in England. " The very Mass itself is an effort in this direction. The whole of this service with its accompanying ritual is a symbolic representation of the most arresting episodes in the life of Christ, and it is but natural[1] that the clergy should have attempted to make it even more outwardly symbolic, as the knowledge of Latin among ordinary people passed further and further into the background." [7]

Such authoritative remarks show us the reasonableness of the connexion between Religion and Drama. But the difficulty in the case of India is the different state and the different course of her religion. The days of Greece were the days of democracy ; while in the theory of Christianity every member of that religion had a kind of natural and equal status. In both these cases religion and religious ceremonies involved a free mixing on a large scale of all the followers. But in India, it has been different from the very beginning. In religion as well as in social life, both in theory and in practice, there

6. **Brit. Drama, p. 15.**

7. ***Ibid,* p. 20.**

has been an assertive superiority (and a graded segregation) of the learned over the ignorant, of the ruler over the ruled, of the Aryans over the non-Aryans and later still of the Brahmins over the so-called lower castes. Religious performances were rarely communal in the sense of a social gathering; they were the monopoly of Brahmins at first and of a priest-class later ; and others were practically barred from an active participation. The Vedic hymns were declared " un-touchable" to any except Brahmins or Priests. As a result these hymns became the property of pedantic scholars interested, more than anything, in hair-splitting interpretations. There was nothing popular about such a development. The ignorant and the lower castes played no part in social or cultural life. And Drama, we are told, originated for such persons and purposes.

na veda-vyavahiaro'yam samsravyam sudra-jatisu
tasmat srjaparam vedam pancamam sarvavannikam.[8]

" These Vedic texts (or practices) are not to be heard by (i.e. are not accessible to) the Sudras, create a new and a fifth Veda accessible to all the castes."

In answer to this prayer of the Gods, Brahma created Drama. It is interesting to note that everything connected with Drama is associated with lower castes. It so happened, the N. S. tells us, that the sons of Bharata became too arrogant on account of their dramatic art. The traditional sages resented and cursed every one of them. " You shall lose your art since you are so arrogant and ill-mannered. You shall lose the Brahmin culture and shall take to the ways of the Sudras. We hereby degrade you to the Sudras' status. Your descendants shall be perpetually born into the Sudra caste." [9] Not only the Art and advocates but even the first patron of Drama was an anti-Vedic if not a non-Aryan King. King Nahu§a whom we know from the early Vedic days[10] and who figures even in the epic literature[11] is spoken of as the first patron of drama in the mortal world.[12] His very name 'na-hut' (non-sacrificer) speaks of anti-Vedic tendencies and his quarrels with the Gods and the Brahmins are handed down in legendary lore.

8. N. S. 1-12.
9. N. S. XXXVI, 34-37.
10. See Vedic Index under " Nahusa."
11. M.B.H. Ill 183.
12. N. S. XXXVI, 48 ff.

From the foregoing discussions it seems likely that Sanskrit Drama has least to do with religion or religious rites; that it is the work of people treated as anti-Vedic, if not as non-Aryan, fiends, and that its origins are to be sought in the interests of the lower castes and its patron in a king—a non-Aryan adventurer.

Before hastening to any conclusion from the above deductions, we shall deal with a point which is also likely to suggest a popular, non-religious origin of Sanskrit Drama. That point concerns itself with dumb shows.

CHAPTER VI

DUMB SHOW AND DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION

Drama, to Bharata, means a representation by means of speeches and actions. Mere imitation, it seems, is not admitted by Bharata as drama unless it is followed by words and actions ; for, he speaks of drama in these words :

evam budhafr param bhavam sosmiti manasa smaran
viag-anga-gati-lilabhiscestabhisca samacaret. (XXXV-14).

" Where by means of gestures, physical and verbal, a clever actor identifies himself with the person and the situation he represents."

With these views of his, Bharata can never be expected to subscribe to the view that drama originated in a puppet or a pantomime show. No doubt, we can believe the existence in ancient India of such shows. Even in the modern days the Indian villagers have retained the puppet shows, probably in the same form in which they must have existed then. Thus, we read in the Mahabharata :

yatha darumaylm yo$am narab sthira-samahitab
ingayatyangam aingjani tatha rajann imah prajah.[1]

"Just as a man, without moving himself, moves the wooden dolls, so, Oh King, does the Lord with each and every being." .

Further we have the view of some scholars who hold that the Sutradhara or the stage-manager in Sanskrit plays is an evidence of earlier puppet shows (Skt. *sutra,* a thread ; hence Sutradhira means, one who holds the thread or the agent behind the puppet shows). Prof. Keith seems to recognise such a stage in the evolution of Sanskrit Drama. " We seem in fact" [2] says he " to have in the Mahabhiasya evidence of a stage in which all the elements of a drama were present; we have acting in dumb show, if not with words also." Lastly, Bharata himself may be said to suggest an origin from such dumb shows when, as already described, he traces the four *vrttis* of a drama to a fight between Krsna and the demons. Thus it would appear

1. Quoted by Madhva in his Brahma-Sutra-Bhasya, II, i. 24.
2. Skt. Drama, p. 36.

that later dramatic representation originated, as likely as not, from puppet and dumb shows or from recitational shows based on them.

There are, however, obvious miscalculations in such a hypothesis. We are not quite so sure if the puppet shows were a regular amusement. We have no reference in the two Sanskrit authorities on dramaturgy, the N. S. and the D. R.—to the puppet shows, nor is there any indication thereof either. On the other hand, it might be argued —and not unreasonably—that the puppet shows were merely the substitute of the populace for the dramatic luxury of the intellectuals. Even Bharata's account of the four *vrttis* from recitation to representation, might not be referring to Vedic recitations or to God-and-demon fights. Lastly, the significance of the word Sutradhara seems to have been missed. If the Sutradhara were doll-dancer of the popular puppet shows his name would most likely have descended to us in Prakrt or some other non-Sanskrit form. In contrast to that of the word nati (see Chap. VIII below) the form of the word " Sutradhara" is Sanskrit. There are some indications in earlier literature which show that the word '"Sutradhara " was coined for purposes quite different. In the first book of the Mahabharata, King Janamejaya is about to perform a sacrifice. The sacrificial ground had to be prepared. In that context we read :

sthapatir buddhisampanno vastu-vidya-visaradah
ityabravit sutradharah suto pauraijikas tada.[8]

"Then the Suta Pauranika who was an expert on land and building, the sutradhara said thus."

The Pauranika Suta is here said to be an expert) on land and ***sculpture and along with this he is called a sutradhara.*** **Why ? The** next line gives a sufficient clue to the answers.

yasmin dese ca kale ca mapaneyam pravartitam

"The time and the place where the measurements were to be taken."

It seems that the Suta was a man who used to measure out the grounds for sacrificial purposes. For this work of an expert he was called a Silpagamavetta. (Cf. the commentary; on the above verse.) That an expert on "silpa—sculpture " was called a Sutradhara could be said with greater justification on the authority of some other

3. Chap. 51, verse 15.

references, as the one from Act II of Mudra-Riaksasa. At the time of Candraguta's entry into the palace all the Sutradharas of the -capital were commanded by Canakya to decorate the streets as far as the palace gates. The-smore we read the word " Sutradhara " in this context the more are we convinced that a Sutradhara was more than a carpenter and had something to do with land and building. It was on account of this work that he was called a Sutradhara, i.e., one who holds out a thread. He took the measurements of the ground by means of a thread. And if we are to believe it, Bharata says the same thing when he describes that a ground for an auditorium and a stage has to be set apart. We have already described how, owing to the obstruction of the demons a niaityavesma, i.e., a play-house was found an essential pre-requisite to Bharata, the Producer. The ground had to be measured out; the process is described to be very delicate and dangerous, so an expert had to be called in. This was the Suta, already referred to in the Mbh. as the Sutradhara.

pusya-naksatra yoge tu suklam *sutram* prasarayet

" A white piece! of thread should be stretched out at (the auspicious time of) the conjunction of pausya." [4]

This is one of the reasons why the Sutradhara enters at the very opening of a play. In the passage from the Mbh. quoted above he is also called a " Stha-pati"—one who arranges the ground plot. Probably on this analogy the prologue in early plays is called a " Sthapana." The Suta is the Sutradhara; the work of the " Sthiapati" is the " Sthapana."

If thus the Sutradhara or the Sthapati is the Suta himself we shall have to modify our views about the origin of dramatic representation. The puppet shows would now be thrown into the background and our search will have to follow the footsteps of the Suta. The Suta, as mentioned already, was a professional reciter. As time went on, this recitation might naturally have been accompanied by music and instruments. From the fanciful account in the N. S.[5] it appears probable that a musician and an instrumentalist were somehow called " kusilava." It should be noted in this connection that the epic Ramayana of Vialmiki was sung before Rama to the accompaniment of musical instrument. The two singers—the sons of Rama

4. N. S. II, 28, cf. the verses following also in this connection.

5. nariatodyavidhane prayogayuktah pravadane kuslah. "One who is an expert in playing on various musical instruments " XXXV, 84.

as yet unrecognised by the latter—were Kusa and Lava by name. In any case we might well understand the Suta being accompanied by the Kusilavas, so much so that at the stage of dramatic representation when the Suta turned into a Sutradhara, the Kusilavas turned into paripiaisvakas, i.e., those who kept by the side of Sutradhara and played music.

Acceptance of the above suggestions would lead us back to a reconsideration of the four *vrttis* mentioned by Bharata. It was the Suta, the wandering minstrel, who must have been responsible, by accident or through experience, for the introduction of Dramatic Representation. Alone he could only recite. In the company of the Kuslavas he might seek the aid of the latter either by way of a kind of chorus or by actually helping him with certain portions in the recitation. The form of the two epics was specially favourable to such a division of labour. The major part of the Mahabharata and a fairly good portion of the Ramayana are composed of dialogues. So the Suta and the Kusilavas could carry on the dialogue with greater effect. In the form of the epics there is no mention in the body of the verses as to who is speaking. Outside the verses we have sub-headings as 'Yudhisthira uvaca,' 'Suta uvaca,' 'Draupadi uvaca' ("Y. said," "S. said," "D. said") and so on. In a representation such a sub-heading was not necessary. At the very commencement of the recitation the Suta would announce the roles to be played. Curiously enough, in many of the existing plays, we have an identical circumstance where the Sutradhara tells the audience, then and there, the role he is going to assume. Thus, in the prologue to the Mrcchakatika, the Sutradhara says : esosmi bhoh karyavasat prayogavasat ca prakrta-bhasi samvrttah " Here, sirs, I am going to speak in Prakrt because of my part to *be* played." A more interesting reference is in the plays of Bhavabhuti—interesting because Bhavabhuti has a first-hand experience of the actors.[6] The Sutradhara in the U. R. says " eso'smi bhoh karyavaSad ayodhyikas tadanlntanasca sarhvrttah. Here I have turned myself, for the action of the play, into a citizen of Ayodhya of Rama's days." Similarly at the end of the prologue to MM. the Sutradhara and his friend

6. Bhavabhuti is described as nisarga-sauhrdena bharatesu vartamanalj, "who lived, naturally attracted, in the company of actors" (Prologue M.M.); Kavir mitradheyam asmakam, "the poet is our personal friend" says the Sutradhara, (Prologue M. V. C).

assume! then and there the r61es of Kamandaki and Avalokita respectively.

There is one more reason to hold that the Sutradhara is the original Suta. In almost; allthe plays it is the Sutradhara that introduces to the audience the life and lineology of the dramatist. In the earlier days this was one of the duties of the Suta who had to study and describe the life and lineology of gods, sages, kings and great men.[7] No one was more fitted for the task.

It was thus the post-epic Suta and not the puppet shows that originated dramatic representation; the recitation of the epic and not that of religious hymns is the Bharati stage ; the recitation of the suta and the kusuilavas, the Siatvati stage; in the KaiSiki vrtti the dancer nata was introduced ; the Arabhati is the final mode of " full dress " staging and from its beginning to its death, Sanskrit drama took its hero from the Suta and the epics that he recited and never, never, from the religious lore or from the host of Vedic gods.

7. Cf. C. H. I. Vol. I, p. 297.

CHAPTER VII

ORIGIN OF SANSKRIT DRAMA

(Conclusion)

We are now in a position to view the question of the origin of Sanskrit Drama from a broader view-point. It should be remembered that by drama, in this connection, is meant dramatic representation. In the first place, the chief person connected with the representational form of drama is the Suta who had achieved great reputation soon after the epics. This Suta was a professional reciter par excellence. In course of time he gathered round him two or more musicians and instrumentalists. In the early days the Suta could be expected to represent dramatically the traditional and the mythological episodes which it was his profession to learn and recite. We have shown in an earlier place[1] that the word najtaka originally meant only the representation of traditional or mythological episodes. There is an interesting passage in the Natyaisastra which throws some light on the initial stages of such representation. With reference to nataka and prakarairia—two early varieties of drama—*a big number of characters is prohibited.*

> na mahajana-parivaram kartavyam natakam prakaranam va
> ye tatra karyiah purusas catvarah panca va te syuh[2]

"i In a nattaka or prakaraina it is not advisable to have a crowd of characters ; four or five would do." The Suta and his musical friends were perhaps to answer for this small number of characters.

Thus did Sanskrit Drama originate soon after the epics. But before it assumed its rightful place as one of the most simple and straightforward means of expression and education and entertainment it had to fight a hard, hard battle. To start with, the chief person connected with drama was the Suta, a man of respectable tradition but of inferior blood.[3] Even the Vedic traditions condemned the

1. Chapter III.
2. N. S. XX 40.
3. In the laws of Manu the Suta is classed as a *candala* the ancestor of the modern untouchables. X 26.

Suta, after a time, to a degraded position.[4] The legend in the N.S. of the Bharatas cursed to a Sudra status tells the same tale in the language of a different generation.

Even popular sympathy would not carry with it the Suta and his band. Soon after the epics came the Emperor ASoka under whose reign all kinds of amusements were banned. It is more than probable that in his Girnar Rock Edict I[5] King ASoka refers, by the word " samaja," to an audience or assembly such as that entertained by the Suta. King piyadasi sees many dangers in a Samaja. " bahukam hi dosam samajahmi pasati devanam piyo piyadasi raja " says the emperor. We do not say the word " samaja " refers only to dramatic representation[6]; however we would insist that the idea of a " Samaja " *does* include the audience of a dramatic representation. Even in later Sanskrit plays we find an audience usually addressed as *parisad,* an assembly (of connoisseurs).[7] That at some time, the Suta addressed such parisads, open of course to the general public of taste, is obvious from the vehement attack in the laws of Manu against such parisads conducted by the Suta and composed of persons not soaked with Vedic lores.

avrataniam amantra|nam jatimatropajivinam
sahasrasah sametanam parisattvam navidyate[8]

" Even thousands would not constitute a parisad if they are undisciplined, un-initiated and if they make it a *profession of maintenance"*

In some of the later plays the words " Samaja " and "Samajika" are used in the sense of " an audience " and " a member of an audience " respectively. It could be added without hesitation that the words "Samaja" and "Parisad" are synonymous in this respect. In the Malav. of Kalidasa, the hero-king has to watch the dancing performance of Mialavika. (Act I). "Let us be samajika-s" (devi, samajika bhavtamali) says he to the queen. Similarly in the Prologue to the Rat. of Sri Harsa the Sutradhara says that he has attracted the attention of the samajika-s i.e audience (aye, avarjitani

4. cf. C. H. I. Vol. I, p. 297.
5. Dr. Woolner's edition.
6. Vide " Samaja " in the Glossary *ibid.*
7. Cf. abhirupa-bhuyistha parisad iyam "this house mostly consists of experts " (Prologue A. Sak.)
8. M. S. XII 114.

sakala-samajikanam mamamsi iti me nigcayah). In the Prologue to Jayadeva's Prasanna-Raghava likewise the Sutradhlara sees hi9 actor-friend coming from through the audience with a message from the latter : nunam etad-abhisamdbanad eva samajika-samajad ito* bhivartate sakha me ranga-tarangah). The actor-friend comes in and says, "Sir, the audience (siamajikah) send you this instruction through me" (bhava, idam manmukhena eva bhavantam udirayanti samajikah). These and many other references of the kind would bear out the interpretation of the word " samaja " as the audience of a dramatic performance. Such *samajas* were prohibited by the Emperor who ruled over the largest Indian Empire in history. Could we believe, as history would have us believe in all such cases, that the *samajas* flourished for the simple reason that they were prohibited? Any healthy institution in history that has been attempted to be suppressed by royal or religious rigour has either run underground into uncouth, uncultivated hands or rubber-like, has bounced with doubled vigour and vivacity. Nothing more natural, then, than that the *samsjas* should have persisted—though in constant fear of the authorities. There was, however, a greater chance for such *samajas* to flourish in those parts of the Empire, where ASoka's power only hung like a shadow. Thus in southern as well as in western India could be expected a survival of and an encouragement to the *samdjas*. History has some evidence to show that Sanskrit was patronised more, and more in the west and in the south soon after, as well as during Asoka's reign. This is the beginning of the revival of Sanskrit, which culminated in the shifting of the centre of culture and learning to Ujjain in the west. Most of the kings that patronised this revival were either the non-Aryan Kings in the south or the later non-Indian invaders in the west of India. We have already mentioned how the Bharatas wandered through the modern Rajputana to the south of India. If, in these circumstances, Bharata says that King Nahusa is the first patron, he has more reasons to say so and more cleverness in saying it.

SHATTER VIII

THE EARLY STAGES OF THE DEVELOPMENT

(Sutradhara, nati, prastavana and sthdpana),

In the preceding chapter we saw, in connection with the origin of Sanskrit Drama, the importance of the Suta who later on came to be recognised, in the dramatic world, as the Sutradhara. As a matter of fact, in all the Sanskrit plays available, the first character to appear on the- stage is the Sutradhara. We shall here attempt to sketch the career of the Sutradhara in the world of dramatic performances.

As already mentioned, the Sutradhara is usually accompanied by the musicians. It is not, however, necessary that it must be *always* so. Whether he is alone or whether he is in the company of the musicians and the dancers his one function is to introduce the piece of performance to the (as he always says it, learned) audience. After performing the usual worshipping ceremony (not necessarily in the presence of the audience) he steps on the stage and informs the audience of the play and its contents. Remembering the fact that in the earlier days it was the Suta himself who did this work in his recitation, we need not expect hkn, any and every time, to introduce his subject or to explain the context and so on. The earliest representational form did not require any such intermittent introductions. Therein the story as well as the hero were too well known.[1] The various episodes and legends of the epics were already too popular to need description; contemporary episodes and events would not as well need any separate mention; and thus, in the earliest plays, the Sutradhara entered the stage just formally to initiate the play. In the existing Sanskrit plays this feature can be observed very frequently. Wherever the story and the characters are too well known the Sutradhara merely mentions them. In the A. Sak. of Klalidasa, for example, the story is a traditionally popular one. The Sutradhara merely mentions the title and the story is immediately known to the audience. Where, however, the story is

1. Cf. the definition of nataka in N. S. XX 10 " prakhyata-nayaka " " prakhyata-vastu-visaya/' " well known hero " " well known plot."

not so universally known he describes it for the audience. A good example is the Mrch. of (Sudraka. Here the Sutradhara presents the audience with a synopsis. " There lived a Brahmin merchant named Clarudatta in Ujjain. Irt his poverty, only his mistress Vasantasena was attached to his virtues. A love-affair between the Brahmin and her, like the vernal splendour, is dramatized by king Sudraka who has depicted therein the ways of the world, the wickedness of life and men and Fate."[2]

The three plays of Bhavabhuti are also an illustration in this respect. In U. R. the story is well known and it is merely mentioned; and the same holds true of the prastavania in Act VII to the play within the play. In MM. the whole story is narrated by Kiamandaki which role the Sutradhara himself has taken. The Sutradhlara of Bhavabhuti is always more skilful in first assuming a role contemporary with the story. In certain cases where only parts of a well known story are dramatized the Sutradhara explains the context. Thus in M. V. C. the actor-friend says to the Sutradhara : kjtaprasadah parisadiah. kim tu apurvatvat prabandhasya katha-pradesam samarambhe srotum icchanti." " The audience is humoured, but as the play is unusually constructed, it wants to know at the very beginning the particular part of the story" (of Ramayana). Similarly in the V. S. of Bhatta Narayana, dealing with the well-known epic story of the Kauravas and the Pand]avas, the Sutradhara gives an idea of what part of the epic story has been dramatized. With this can be compared the statement in the U. R. " atrabhavatali .... Maharaja-ramasya ayam pattabhiseka-samayah." " This is the coronation function of Rama"—whereby Bhavabhuti informs the audience that he has dramatized the Ramayana story subsequent to Rama's coronation.

The above illustrations are mentioned only to point out the functions of the Sutradhara. In this respect, the Sanskrit Sutradhlara evolved like the Prologues of Euripides. The Greek tragedian found Prologues necessary since his story or treatment was usually out-of-the-way sort. In Sanskrit Dramas the Sutradhara appeared even where the story was well-known. This difference is due to the fact that the Sutradhara was there even before the Sanskrit Drama while the Prologues of Euripides came in as a device long after the Greek Drama.

2. I 6-7.

There is another function of the Sutradhara which must have been one of the earliest. After informing the audience of the play etc. he immediately, but giving an intimation to the audience beforehand, assumes a r61e in the play. We have already given instances of this nature. In the early days the sketches must have been such as were conveniently composed of a few characters; the art of " make-up " i.e. the *nepathya* must have been unknown or unavailed of. So the Sutradhara, at one stroke of his word, assumed the role required and in the new capacity introduced the other characters as well. That the Sutradhara *did* introduce all the characters may be reasonably imagined on the analogy of the modern village shows where on the first entry of any character, he asks the name, the purpose of the arrival and other details thereof.

Performing as he did these various functions, the Sutradhara was known as the Sthapaka. As Bharata tells us[3] the Sutradhara is himself the Sthapaka when he opens the play.

prayujya vidhinaivam tu purvarangam prayogatah
sthapakali praviSet tatra sutradhara-guinakrtih

" After the initiatory stage worship should enter the sthapaka, whose garb and functions are the same as those of the Sutradhara."

As Viswanlatha, the author of the S. D., explains later on, the Sthapaka was, for all practical purposes, known as the Sutradhara. The scene in which the Sutradhara, entered as Sthapaka was known as the sthapana " foundation, ground work, opening," or Prologue. Thus we have sthapanas in all the plays ascribed to Bhiasa. In most of them the Sutradhara (he is not styledi as Sthiapaka here) alone enters the stage to introduce the story and the situation and the. characters to the audience.

As Dramatic Art progressed things must have developed. We have already seen how music and dance were gradually introduced into such representations. With the addition of these features the functions of the Sutradhara had to be modified. He need no longer introduce the play in the dry, formal manner or in an equally abrupt way. (cf. the sthapanais in Bhiasa's plays where the Sutradhara is immediately made to listen to some words from behind the stage which he goes on to explain with reference to a context in the plot.)

3. N.S. V 164. Cf. also S.D. VI 26-27.

The functions of the Sutradhiara were not only modified but, as time went on, they multiplied. The musicians—the Kusilavas were also brought on the stage. As there was no recitation now which they could set to music, the Kusi1avas helped the Sutradhara to open the play with music. Whatever the pretext under which music was played there was no doubt that the audience was more pleasantly lulled into a receptive mood. Besides supervising the overture, so to say, the Sutradhara had, when later on dancing was also introduced, to face a woman who sang and danced but who, after all, had to be utilised for the purpose of introducing the play. That dancing came in the wake of music is evident from the fact that the word natl, a danseuse, is a Prakrt form. That both music and dancing were simply introduced to make the opening less formal and more pleasant and to humour the audience into a sympathetic attitude, that they had nothing to do with the play and that they had no place in the evolution of dramatic representation is recognised by Bharata himself. " Dancing plays no part in a drama." It is introduced on the stage simply because it adds to the charm of the production. Everyone has a natural weakness for dancing. It amuses the audience.[4] But it should not be overdone. " If dancing and music are given in excess the audience as well as the actors are likely to be tired of it."[5] Thus a new responsibility was thrown on the shoulders of the Sutradhara. Not only should music and dancing be not overdone but he had to see, in the name of his ability as manager and producer, that, in spite of their charm, they were not entirely unconnected with the show. The very circumstances under which a play was produced in those days gave the Sutradhiara a chance to fit in music and dance. Plays in the early days, it should be remembered, were performed in the open. What would be more seemly than singing a hymn in praise of the surroundings, or more poetically, in praise of the season itself? The only favourable seasons for a performance in the open are the Spring and the Autumn. So in almost all the Sanskrit plays we find the nati singing in praise of these two seasons.

The character of Nati is interesting from one point of view. What was her position in the play or in the troupe of actors ? In the early days we can well believe her to be a songstress and a

4. N. S. IV 260-263.
5. N. S. V. 161.

danseuse and such we find her in most of the plays. She was in no better advantage, except in her natural charm and grace, than the Kusilavas who were also musicians. And yet the advent of nati marked the rarity, if not the total disappearance, of the Kusilavas in the dramatic world. Such is the conquest of charm and grace and delicacy in the world of Art! It is always the •shrewd, keen-eyed Eve that is attracted by the Forbidden Fruit and then tempts the clumsy Adam on to it. Whether it was the Sutradhara, or the audience that was tempted first, the fact is clear that as time went on the Sutradhara and the nati are thrown mone and more together. In some later plays like the Mrch., the Rat, or the M. R. the nati is represented as the wife of the Sutradharai. She is not addressed as arye (oh ! noble lady) merely but as "my dear" and all that by the Sutradhara. Was she the wife of the Sutradhara or the wife of the Sthapaka ? In the first case, we have to imagine a *hereditary professional caste of nqtis;* in the second, *merely a professional* class. A close perusal of Sanskrit plays would tempt one to believe that there gradually arose a hereditary professional caste of actors. In the prologue to the Rat. the Sutradhura tells his wife (grhi;ni) that his younger brother has dressed himself up in the role of Yaugandharaya|ra (nanu ayam mama yaviyan bhriata grhita-yaugandharayaina-bhumikah prapta eva). By the time of Harsa (607 A.D.—640 A.D.) we can believe in the existence of such a caste. Leaving aside the momentary inconveniences of some settled views in chronology we might take it as a fairly general rule that plays where the nati is represented as the wife of the Sutradhara are later in age. The M.R., for example, gives interesting details of the relations between these two characters. The Sutradhara addresses his wife in these words.

gu|navati upayanilaye sthiti-heto gadhike trivargasya,
madbhavaina-niti-vidye kuryad arye drutam apaihi

" Diligent and resourceful, you are the guide of my life ; virtttr ous as you are, you are my helpmate to the Higher Truths; you are my domestic deity, presiding over the art of management etc."

To resume the narration. The nati thus became a permanent member of the Sutradhara band. With the aid of the Kusilavas and the nati, the Sutradhara could entertain the audience and at the same time inform them of the play, the plot, the characters and

60 on. His work now was not mere sthiapana or introduction but introduction with amusement or, to use the technical words of Sanskrit dramaturgy, the sthiapana was now called a *prastavana.* The prastavana was originally nothing else but the music, the singing in praise (the Skt root '*stu*'—means "to praise") of the seasonal charm. It was the music essentially that made the difference between the sthaparua and the prastavana. It is only in some later plays like the M. R. or the V. S. that we read of a prastavana with no music on the stage. Music and not necessarily the nati, is the distinctive feature of the prastavana, and hence even the Kusalavas turned a sthapanla into a prastavana. It would be unnecessary to stress the point too much since the Prologue was soon enough standardised.

Lastly, one more feature must be pointed out which is persistent in and characteristic of all Prologues. It is a commonplace that in iamy ballad-singing attention is first attracted and then retained by establishing personal relations with the audience. This tendency must have existed in the earlier plays, more so since those performances were given in the open. No ruse would serve the purpose better than flattering the audience to the skies. Even in modern folk-songs this feature is not to be missed. Similarly the Suta and the other bards and ballad-singers in the early days praised their audience. The Sutradhara of Sanskrit plays does the same. He addresses his audience, as "noble sirs" (laryamisra) "learned" (vidvat), "appreciative (guaja-grahin)" and so on. This feature of taking the audience into the dramatist's confidence and of establishing a personal relationship between the actors and the audience is to be found in early literature of other countries as well. We can compare the tone of Kalidiasa's Prologue to his A. sak. (where he says that he would not deem his performance a success unless the learned audience is pleased (a paritosad vidusam na sadhu manye prayogavinajnam) with, for example, the chorus in Aristophanes ***Frogs:***

Fear not for a want of sense,
    Or judgment in your audience,
That defect has been removed
    They're prodigiously improved.
Thus their own ingenious natures
    Aided and improved by learning,

Will provide you with spectators
Shrewd, attentive and discerning.[6]

We might as well mention, before we conclude, one difference in this respect between the Sanskrit and the early Greek plays. Personal relationship is maintained in both ; but, while in Sanskrit plays the Sutradhiara or the prastavania alone is utilised for this purpose, in Greek, besides the chorus, even the characters within the play address the audience. Thus, again in Frogs :

Bacchus :—Do you see the villains and the perjurers that he told us of ?
Xanthias :—Yes, plain enough, don't you ?
Bacchus : —Ah, now I see them, indeed, quite plain and now too
(Turning to the audience)[7]

Has it not been mentioned that the Greek drama was more democratic than the Sanskrit ? At the very start they part ways.

6, Plays by Aristophanes (Dent's edition) pp. 60-61.
7. *Ibid*. p. 16.

CHAPTER IX

PLOT-DEVELOPMENT IN SANSKRIT PLAYS

(The *Viskambhaka* and the *Pravesaka)*

The play was introduced first of all to the audience. In that connection we saw that the Sutradhiara was responsible mainly for the introduction to, and partly for the personal touch with, the audience. It should not, however, be supposed that the responsibility of the Sutradhara ended then and there. As the stage-manager he was responsible for the whole show. In this chapter we shall see if the Sutradhiara had any other functions besides introducing the play and its general management.

Drama, as suggested in connection with its origin, was a representation of selections. Whenever a story is represented it should not be supposed, and it will never be found possible either, to represent each and every incident in all its details. The central theme might be a heroic deed or a noble truth ; some relevant points are represented so that the central theme is set in brighter relief. Besides, from the early days, drama had had the advantage of being a complete unit by itself. Thus the story in any play proceeded along broader lines while the minor and relevant details were summarised in their proper places for the convenience of the audience. This is what is meant by plot-development here.

How, then, was a representational story developed in the earlier days ? In the very beginning we can believe the Suta or the Sutradhiara shouldering responsibility in this respect for any representation. If it were the dialogues from the epics the Suta would recite in company with his musicians ; passages that were not in dialogue form either the Suta recited alone or summarised. We could say all this if there were any evidence to warrant the existence of such a representational form in the earlier days. There is, however, no definite evidence for such a hypothesis. If at all we are to judge by comparisons we must go back to some other country or civilization. In connection with " Religion and Drama" it was shown how dangerous it would be to judge by comparisons. Nevertheless, we cannot pass over a circumstance that obtains in some of the earlier

Greek plays. In establishing a personal relation with the audience it was seen how closely, functionally and favourably the Sutradhlara compared with the Greek chorus. The chorus had not this only function. " We can see that the chorus was also capable of fulfilling a very useful function. It served to punctuate the stages of the action (as the drop curtain now serves to divide scene from scene, but with the disadvantage of arresting[1] it entirely). It gave a convenient interval, during which important events might be supposed to happen off the stage———and, above all, it gave the poet an opportunity of commenting and moralizing upon the progress of the events in the play proper." Thus it was the chorus which kept the audience, once the play commenced, in touch with the continuity of the action.

How was it done in the earlier Sanskrit dramatic representations? Could we suppose that like the Greek chorus the Sanskrit Sutradhlara too, played an important part in the plot development ?

A glance at some of these Sanskrit plays would reveal that from a known period this kind of plot-development was carried out in a peculiar way. There was nothing like a chorus or any character or characters equivalent to it to keep the audience in touch with the events off the stage. On the other hand, some characters in the play itself were utilised for the purpose; further, the type of characters used in this way seems to have been fixed—since the traditional authorities on dramaturgy not only recognised that fact but turned it into a kind of a technicality to be strictly observed by dramatists. Two varieties of such a technique are recognised—one known as Vi$kambhaka and the other as Pravesaka. Three authorities (N.S., D. R., and S. D.) define them in practically identical phrases. In the D. R. these two are defined as

(i) Vrtta-vartisyamananam kathamsamam nidarsakah
samkseparthas tu viskambho madhyapatra-prayojitah (1-59)

" A Viskambhaka is that which summarises, through characters of an intermediate status, past and future incidents," and

(ii) tadvad-evianudlattoktya nica-patra-prayojitah
pravesonka-dvayasyantah sesarthasyopasucaka (I. 60)

"A pravesa(ka) is similar, only the characters are of a lower status, and the pravesa itself appears in between two acts. The

1. C E. Robinson, *The Genius of the Greek Drama,* Intro, p. 16.

pravesa further suggests sesartha i.e. the remaining (in other words, not quite important or relevant) details."

Before trying to analyse these definitions and distinctions we shall see, by reference to some Sanskrit plays, the parts played therein by the Viskambhaka and the Pravesaka.

Let us take into consideration some of Bhisa's plays and examine how such wants, if any, have been fulfilled. We shall take the scenes as they are m the text, viz., as viskambha or pravesaka or under whatever name they appear. In S. V., for example, we have three pravesakas (Acts II, IV and V) and one viskambhaka (Act VI). (As a matter of fact it is known as misra or mixed vi§kambhaka since Sanskrit and PrSkjt are to be found together in the dialogue). All the pravesakas here have practically nothing to add to the story ; on the other hand, every one of them introduces the following main scene. In Act IV the pravesaka informs the audience that the scene to follow is laid in the *Samudra-gjha.* In contrast to these pravesakas the vi§kambhaka in the last act is important for the actual development of the story. It gives the audience information about an incident which, for some reason, has not been represented on the stage. Is this difference between a viskambhaka and a pravesaka accidental, or does a viskambhaka alone help the plot-development while a pravesaka is utilised for purposes like the stage-setting etc. ? If the viskambhaka is a vital factor in the plot-development we can understand why the traditional authorities speak of *Madhyama-patra,* i.e. characters of an intermediary status and Sanskrit language (mainly) in this connection. We have already said that the incidents about the hero and the heroine could be described only by characters of a fairly high status; this surmise would be quite justified if the viskambhaka alone played the part of the Greek chorus, viz., of summarising " important events .... supposed to happen off the stage" while the pravesaka was merely a kind of scene-shift, where, as the authorities say, nlca-patra i.e. characters of a lower status might be utilised.

That such was the earlier and genuine difference between the viskambhaka and the pravesaka is made more evident by the three plays of Kalidasa. The distinction has been emphasised by the genius of that dramatist If the viskambhaka would connect two main episodes by the narration of the interim incidents, it was found very handy for the original constructive art of Kalidasa. Not only the unrepresented incidents, but those newly added or newly inter-

preted could also be conveyed to the audience through the viskambhaka. Thus in Vik. Act. Ill, the vi§kambhaka plays an important part in the development of the story, so much so that a complete idea of the course to be run by-tfie story, is suggested only thereby. The two disciples of Bharata manage to convey to the audience how Urvasi is to be re-united with Vikrama, how she loves the hero, and how long she would live with the hero. With this information got already the audience is quite prepared to sympathise with Vikrama, first in Act IV, when Urvaiss is lost to him and then in Act V when Urvasi leaves him. The major part of the main scene in Act IV is, under these circumstances, more a lyrical passage than a lunatic's raving. This example shows us the viskambhaka in a slightly new light. In plays where the whole story is already known to the audience there is no practical necessity of letting the audience know the incidents left out or supposed to have taken place during the interval. Like that of Vikrama and Urvasi the story of Dusyailta and Sakuntala too was well known from the days of the Mahabhiarata. Theoretically there was thus no need of and no place for the viskambhaka. But viskambhakas there are in A. Sak. The explanation is obvious, as an analysis would show. The viskambhaka would not be strictly necessary in such a story if it is to be represented precisely as in the original. But when the dramatist introduces changes, the audience must be informed if its sympathy and interest are to be retained. The changes of an able dramatist would, of course, be such as would affect the main incidents concerning the hero and the heroine. Thus we come back to what has been just said about the viskambhaka, viz., it is concerned with incidents unrepresented on the stage, or supposed to have happened during the interval and also incidents connected with the hero and the heroine or the central theme. In the instance quoted above (Vik. Ill) it is not a new episode, that has been introduced ; but a new meaning, a new place, and a new significance have been given to the one already known; and the playwright conveys it to the audience through the viskambhaka. Similarly in Malav. the viskambhaka is to be found in the very first act where the whole background, of the play, has been painted with lines suggestive of the future incidents. The story of king Agnimitra and his love-affairs might not have been so popular but the viskambhaka in the beginning promises some interesting developments.

Of a greater interest and a greater importancs ^:« — *« two

viskambhakag in A. Sak—one in Act III and the other in Act IV The story of the play, as mentioned so often, was sufficiently popular. Kalidasa, however, does not seem to have written the play for the interest and estimate it had with the,populace. His interest was not merely to represent dramatically the traditional story. In Act III there is a]viskambhaka which is very short and thus very easy to analyse. In this viskambhaka the whole of Act III has been brilliantly and artistically introduced. Dusyanta's love for Sakuntala has been sufficiently revealed so far. Now the first thing that the audience knows from the vikambhaka is that Sakuntala is not keeping well. But the words used are enough to suggest to the audience of those days what this " un-wellness " is. (latapa-langhaniad balavad-asvastha-isarira SakuntaE). The whole of Act III—iSakuntala writing a love letter, Dusyanta overhearing her when she reads it out to her friends etc.—is the pure invention of the dramatist. A dramatic situation is created to bring together the hero and the heroine when both of them are mad and blind with love. What would happen when they meet each other ? What if this love's intrigue would lead, in this stage of madness, to something beyond the limits of reason or decency ? All may be fair in love but it would not be fair to talk of all that afterwards. But Kalidasa gives no chance for the audience to feel unnecessarily virtuous, not even out of neighbourly considerations. In the viskambhaka itself the sisya informs the audience, that, after all, the venerable Gautami would come to see Sakuntala. As a matter of fact Gautami does come in just to prevent Dusyanta from flouting stage etiquette. That the audience both demanded and understood such assurances could be reasonably believed, since Kalidasa himself describes it in his prologue as "cultured" (abhi-rupa bhuyisthia parisad iyam); at least Kalidasa wrote only for such an audience.

Likewise the viskambhaka in Act IV prepares the audience, in a clever way, for the new incidents and the original interpretation of the dramatist. To start with, Kalidasa has invented a situation and that situation has been described at length, viz., the part to be played by the ring ; secondly, that the whole episode should be interpreted as a tragedy in the highest sense is suggested throughout the viskambhaka. The disturbing calmness of the undisturbed morn, the uneasiness of the friends, Dusyanta not sending any message, the lonely and forlorn figure of iSakuntala seated at the door of the hut, the uncouth outburst of a choleric sage who has reasons to pronounce

an unkind curse—all this is suggestive of the atmosphere into which the play proceeds from now on. Lastly, the curse of DurvSsas must have been significant to the audience. That cursei is symbolic, the tragedy is destined. The audience will sympathise with the heroine, an innocent victim of the cruel and infallible Destiny (me vacanam anyatha bhavitum narhati; my words could never be taken back, says Durvasas).

The viskambhaka with such a significance for the development of the central theme may be compared with the pnaveSakas in these three plays. There are four praveSakas in all. (A. Sak. VI, MSlav. Ill and V, and Vik. II). In all these there is nothing that affects the progress of the main events; no incidents are mentioned that would be important in their bearing on the plot. In some places the pravesaka is there for no other purpose except introducing the following main scene. In others, the pravesaka is nothing but a kind of a stage-shift in favour and for the convenience of the audience ; or it merely emphasises certain points of the incidents already represented, (cf. Malav. III).

It would appear from the foregoing as if some presumption is being logically worked out. The above examples have been discussed not because they bear out any presumption but that they reveal a genuine difference, from the early days, between the vi^kambhaka and the praveSaka.' There might be, as there are, instances to the contrary. That in itself would prove nothing as the mere discussion so far would prove nothing by itself. There are many possibilities; hence many considerations will have to be looked into. It is possible that soon enough circumstances that warranted the existence of such a difference between the viskambhaka and the praveSaka as explained above no longer existed, *or* it is possible that the dramatist himself would be an artist superior enough to rise above the tradition or inferior enough, not to utilise that tradition properly. As a matter of fact, even after Kalidiasa, some of the best Sanskrit plays do show this earlier difference between the viskambhaka—that serves the purpose of the stage convenience. The U. R. of Bhavabhuti is a good example. In all there are four viskambhakas in U.R., one each in Acts II, III, IV and VI. In all these four could be observed :

(i) the situations newly introduced by the dramatist,
(ii) the earlier situations themselves newly arranged or newly interpreted, and

(iii) incidents that could not be represented on the stage but were all the same essential for the development of the central theme.

Thus in Act II the vii?kambhaka serves the purpose of not merely summarising the events during the 12 years' interval since Act I, but summarising only those that are relevant to the dramatist's purpose. Similarly in Act VI the viskambhaka describes an event which could not be represented on the stage, viz. the battle between Lava and Candraketu. In Act IV, the viskambhaka serves the purpose of letting the audience know the change of scene and the change of the atmosphere or the tone of the play. We are not any; more in the Dandaka forest lamenting with Rama but have arrived at Valmiki's hermitage where peace and happiness may be legitimately expected. In all these cases the arrangement of the incident is entirely the dramatist's invention. The most emphatic instance, in this respect, is Act III—the masterpiece of Bhavabhuti's art as acknowledged by many a good critic. Therein we have a situation so delicate and so celestial. To enjoy the grandeur, the nobility and the subtlety of the main scene, how successfully important is the viskambhaka? We learn from the viskambhaka that Rama is coming to the Pancavati —a spot in the Danndaka forest where he spent, for the last time, the happiest time of his life with his wife Sita. (Note that in Act I only these memories are referred to.) Those memories would now oppress him worse because of his already dejected mental condition as described in Act II. To make things still worse, Sita herself has been sent there ; and what is artistically and effectively tragic, Sita is not visible to any one except her friend Tamasia. With this information the audience is in a mood to sympathise with the sorrow and to admire the nobility of both Rama and Sitia. On the whole in this play the original significance of the viskambhaka, viz. (i) to narrate, and fill up the gaps in the important and relevant episodes, and (ii) to explain the equally important and relevant artistic innovations—this significance has been retained. As the scenes in which the various episodes are laid are too well known no characters are wasted—as in a pravesaka—in merely introducing the scene. It is more than a mere accident that there are no pravesakasi in the U.R.

The other play of Bhavabhuti—the MM.—has the same observations for a critic. The play is technically known as a) prakaraaia i.e. an incident from the common, human world dramatically represented. As in the Malav. of Kalidasa there is a viskambhaka in the

very first Act of MM. where not only the whole plot is summarised but all the characters, their positions and their mutual relations in the play are briefly narrated. Then there are three more viskambhakas—one each in Acts V, VI and IX. In all these three it is the novelty of the situations to follow that is depicted. The author has introduced some new artistic features as well as some other dramatic situations ; such original strokes are emphasised in the viskambhakas. Thus Acts V and IX are entirely new features; the second is purely a lyrical or musical one abounding in descriptions of nature while the first stealthily introduces the crematorium in all its dreadful hideousness. It is only in Act VI that the vi$kaiftbhaka describes the incidents in the interval. But the two incidents mentioned are such that (as in Act VI of the U. R.) they could not be represented on the stage ; the death of Aghoraghairrta for a technical reason and the marriage procession for a practical difficulty. On the other hand the four pravesakas (Acts II. Ill, VII and VIII) serve the purpose of merely introducing the following main scene (Act III), or of describing the development of the sub-plot (Acts III and VII), or of first summarising the preceding events with reference to the relevant points therein (Act II). Thus the distinct nature of the viskambhaka and the pravesaka has been strictly maintained—the viskambhaka connected artistically with the central theme and the pravesaka connected practically with stage-convenience.

It is time now to turn back: to the technical definitions of the viskambhaka and the pravesaka as given by the traditional authorities. From the passages quoted above, it will be seen that the viskambhaka and the pravesaka were distinguished even in those days. The grounds of distinction, however, appear to be superficial. Thus according to those definitions the difference between the two is threefold :

(i) difference due to the status of the characters as *madhyama* and *riica*,

(ii) difference of the place in which each occurs as at the beginning of the first act or in between the subsequent acts, and

(iii) difference where one suggests past and future events while the other narrates some unimportant events, (se§iartha).

None of these three reveals the whole truth. The first, as has been suggested above, was a mere accident of the early circumstances

where the plays were concerned with heroes and heroines, of an extraordinarily high status ; the second loses much of its significance when in between two acts viskambhakas are found as free and frequent as pravesakas; while the last 19 doubtful for two reasons, (a) In some of the best plays are found viskambhakas whose point is not at all so much to narrate incidents past and future (vrtta- and vartisyamsipa). In Act IX, for example, of Bhavabhuti's MM, is a suddha i.e. unmixed viskambhaka. No relevant incidents past or future are summarised here. The following main scene is introduced in the first three or four sentences and the rest of the profuse niskambhaka is taken up by a description of nature, (b) Secondly, the very interpretation of se§artha, as given above, seems to be doubtful. Even as early as Viswan&tha of S. D. a confusion in this respect is noticeable. Viswanatha who merely repeats the earlier rules has interpreted the phrase " sesiartha" in D. R. as " sesam viskambhake yatWa; otherwise everything else as in the viskambhaka," which means that he recognises only the first two differences. Even in N. S. which should be the earliest of the three this same superficial distinction is recognised. (Cf. XX. 32-39). The pravesaka is a convenient summary of lengthy episodes (36) and the viskambhaka is similar (37). In the first the characters are of a lower status (33) while in the second they are of an intermediary status (37).

It should not be supposed that these treatises have entirely misunderstood the viskambhaka and the pravesaka. From one point the formulation of these rules was fortunate in that they prevented once for all bad writers from writing good plays even by accident. Their rules are based on observations. Those observations might have been incomplete or superficial with the result that the deductions therefrom are incomplete and superficial. The chief reason is love for mere forms and lack of historical or scientific outlook. That the viskambhaka and the pravesaka originated with purposes different, as suggested by us, seems more reasonable if an equally reasonable history of the early development could be traced. In the early stages the Sutradhara recited or summarised the story at the very beginning. In some of the best plays the viskambhakai fulfils that function. (cf. Malav. I and M. M. I) Thus it appears that at some stage the viskambhaka replaces Sutradhara in one of the latter's traditional functions. All he had to do now, at the commencement of the play, was to introduce the poet and the play. The introduction of the

play was simple; he would mention the name or the central theme of it. The introduction of the poet, however, must have been a complicated affair. Mere mention of the name **would** not **carry** weight or conviction. The poet had to be introduced not as an individual but as an artist. In other words, the artistic methods and measures of the dramatist had to be introduced and explained, if necessary. The Sutradhiara as the manager of the show, was more responsible. He could not leave the stage after the formal prastfivania ; we could imagine him waiting there to step out any and every time a new or clever artifice was employed by the dramatist. He! would address the audience just before such a scene and explain the delicate situations that could not be understood merely by watching the course of • events on the stage. Now and then he had to get up and summarise the incidents relevant to the story but not represented on the stage. Thus in the early days the Sutradhara himself must have been fulfilling the functions that later on are carried out by the viskambhakas. And! this evolution of the viskambhaka from one of the early functions of the Sutradhsra, might be responsible for the Sanskrit, and not the Prakrt language, being regularly found therein. We could believe such an early situation not merely on the strength of inference but on actual observations in the modern folk representations—representations of the populace which are ever more honest, more enthusiastic and more conveniently situated to continue the tradition unbroken, unaffected and unmodified. It is probable that as the art of dramatic representation developed with regularity, the Sutradhara was /distinguished in his two roles, (i). when he appeared at the very beginning, and (ii) when he appeared during the interval. In the plays and situations discussed so far, the viskambhaka, more or less precisely, fulfils the second r61e with all its bearings.

In giving these examples we have not the least intention of conveying that plays in which the viskambhaka fulfils the supposed second function of the Sutradhiara are earlier in age than those in which it does not. The only suggestion made is that such plays reveal a natural development of an earlier tendency. This circumstance might or might not be concerned with the relative priority of these plays. Sudraka's Mrchh., for example, has neither viskambhakas nor praveSakas. Could it be reasonably said that the play, therefore, is one of the earliest ? This absence of interludes might be due to the fact that the incidents of the story are so well knit

together in one continuous whole. Could it be said, on the other hand, that this very latter feature shows that the play is one of the later, if not the latest? In Visakhadatta's M.R. there are two pravesakas in Act V and Act VL The first differs from the second, introducing as it does a new situation wherein the *rnudra* or the signet plays the part of involving the Riabsasa into one of the worst complications. In Act VI, the pravesaka simply summarises the events. In spite of this difference both are styled as pravesakas. Is it on a merely technical (superficial enough) ground viz. that the characters belong to a lower status and speak in Prakrt, that the interlude to Act V is called a pravesaka—while it shows features of a genuine viskambhaka ? Could we, because of this scrupulous observance of technicality, assign the play to a fairly later age ? .... This, however, is not the time, nor is it the place, to attempt a definite answer to such questions.

One thing will have to be noted in this connection. With the exception of the plays of Bhavabhuti all other post-Kalidlasa plays show a confusion between the genuine viskambhaka land a pravesaka. The plays of ;Sri-Harisa (601-640 A.D.) are an illustration to the point. In Rat. and Nag. together, there are two viskambhakas (Rat. I, Nag. JV). In the first the story of the play is introduced with the appropriate background. In Nag., Act IV, the viskambhaka has no point whatever. Nothing related to the past events is mentioned ; the only practical use is to let the audience know that the following main scene is laid on the sea-shore *(samudra-vela).* In other words, the viskambhaka here serves the purpose that stage-equipment or curtain would serve in the modern plays and the pravesaka would serve in the older plays. In this function the viskambhaka and the pravesaka have been indiscriminately utilised by Sri-Harsa. (He has, however, recognised an apparent distinction according to the status of and the language spoken by the characters.) Thus the three pravesakas in Rat. II, III and IV, and the pravesaka in Nag. I serve the same purpose of introducing the main scene to follow. Beyond that they have no other function in the play. Probably sri-Harsa himself felt the pointlessness and monotony of such plays; for in Nag. he has initiated a new method of introducing the characters or the scene. As soon as the name of a character is mentioned in some connection in the dialogue, that character enters on to the stage. In Act I, for example, the heroine says that if she stands there talking to unknown men some hermit (tapasa) might detect her. No sooner is the word

" tapasa " mentioned than that character enters. Similarly, in Act II the heroine asks her friend if there is a remedy for her suffering. Her friend replies, "there is, if he (i.e. the hero) were to come here " and lo! the hero does come in before his name is mentioned. Again' (in the same Act the female friend says that Mitiiavasu (the heroine's brother) might be, expected any moment, and who should step in but the very Mitilavasu referred to ! The audience would, in this way, know the characters as well as the context. This only shows that the earlier viskambhakas and prave§akas had lost their original significance, had been confused and had deteriorated, to a dull type where the dialogue was so standardised as to be conventionally monotonous.

A last instance might be given to show the unpopularity and consequent decay of the viskambhaka and the pravesaka. In Bhafta Naraya'oa's V. S. there is one viskambhaka (Act II) and one prave6aka (Act III). Both fulfil the same superficial function of summarising the incidents during the interval and of introducing the main scene to follow. The dramatist, when he created new situations or introduced incidents not represented on the stage, had to resort to newer methods. In Act IV the death of Kama's son is described though it is not so relevant to the central theme as to justify that lengthy description. In Act VI a new situation has been invented by the dramatist. But the way in which the Carvaka Raksasa is introduced and made to carry on the mischief is not only tedious in itself but is also responsible for the subsequent stupid and meaningless developments in that Act.

The earliest Sutradhara who proudly and pompously introduced new situations was thus at last reduced, through the viskambhaka, to a superfluous character (or circumstance) that served as a machine talking in monotonous accents.

CHAPTER X

THE VIDUSAKA

The discussion in the last chapter has carried us to a far later stage in the development of Sanskrit Drama. In connection with the prastavana, the various elements and characters related thereto have been described so far. There is, however, one more character which whether it is earlier or later, appears in the prastavania of some Sanskrit plays and which is mentioned in books on dramaturgy,[1] along with and as part of the definition of a prastiavana. That character is the Vidusaka or the Brahmin court-fool. Is the Vidu-saka in any way co What light does that character throw on the development of Sanskrit Drama ? Such and similar questions will have to be answered before an accurate and a complete picture of the Sanskrit Dramatic literature could be formed.

To start with, it would be better to meet the Vidusaka in the plays themselves rather than in other places as books on dramaturgy etc. The character of the Vidusaka seems to be, one of the earliest. He could be met with even in the earliest known group of Sanskrit plays, viz., in that ascribed to Bhlasa. The S. V., the Avi., and the Car.—the three plays wherein the Vidusaka appears—can in another respect, be distinguished from the remaining ten of that group (with the probable exception of the P. Y.); the subject matter of these three is concerned with the life story of the traditional and mortal heroes of royal races. It has been already suggested that, from the very beginning, plays in) Sanskrit dealt with the life-story of either kings or gods. It should be now noted in addition that the Vidusaka is found only in the luxurious company of princes. Wherever the hero is a mortal king, historical or traditional (history and tradition were not distinguished in those days) the Vidusaka appears on the stage. Is it a mere coincidence ? Or was that character connected in any way to the nature of the hero and of the plot ? When, with the lapse of time, mythology too merged into tradition even mythological heroes like king Vikrama in the Vik. of Kalidasa were provided with a

1. D. R. Ill, 7-8 ; S. D. 31-32.

"Vidusaka. That the Vidusaka is a personal and an intimate friend of the hero-king is obvious even to a casual reader of Sanskrit plays ; that the Vidusaka is a court-fool is also made evident by some of the Sanskrit plays; and that the Vidusaka is a confirmed Brahmin fool with physical as well as mental perversions is a tradition accepted by all the later Sanskrit dramatists.

How did such a character appear at all on the Sanskrit stage? How was it that a Brahmin was represented in such a ludicrous light, especially during those early days when a Brahmin was highly respected through love and fear and habit?

It has been referred to above that, by authorities on dramaturgy, the Vidusaka is mentioned in connection with the prastavana. The 5. D. has these words :

nati vidusako va'pi pariparsvaka eva va
sutradharena sahitali samlapam yatra kurvate
amukham tat tu vijneyam namna prastiavanapi sa

" The prastavania or the opening is that where the nati or the ;actor-friend or the Vidusaka appears in a dialogue with the Sutradhara."

The prastavania as well as the Sutradhara have been shown to be the earliest features in the development of Sanskrit Drama. Can the Vidusaka also, mentioned in that connection, be an equally earlier feature ? Or can it be said that the S. D. being one of the latest treatises (the D. R. too belongs to the 9th or 10th century A.D.), ha9 entirely misunderstood the significance and has been misled by the superficial features of the character of the Vidusaka ?

(i) It is true that the Vidusaka is the closest friend of the hero (who, except in the Clan and the Mrchh.) is invariably a king. In Bhiasa's S. V., a play belonging to the earliest group of known dramas, the Vidusaka is represented as having some of those traits which were later standardised. He refers to hunger and eatables. He is said to be a talkative person[2] which opinion is quite justified throughout the play. But Vasantaka, as he is called here, is not such a perverted fool as he is made to appear in some later plays. Nay; on the contrary, he is not only a sincere friend but a close observer of human nature and quite a resourceful helpmate. There is, moreover, one function which is fulfilled by the Vidusaka, a function that

2. Also cf. Rat. I., A. Sak. II., M51av. III., Mrchh. VI., etc.

could not be fulfilled by any other character, and hence which could be said to be the purpose and the peculiarity of his. He is the only Character, who helps to introduce the hero, who serves as a foil to the latter and who is the only medium .between the hero and the other characters on the one hand and between the hero and the audience on the other. One might even go to the length of saying that in all such plays the hero is introduced in all his relevant personality by the Vidusaka and the Vidusaka alone. He introduces not only the character but the scene and the situation as well The audience is amused and instructed when the Vidusaka describes, in homely and humorous phrases, the scene laid. In most of the Sanskrit plays, whether earlier or later, the Vidusaka is utilised to give the description of the particular scene, surroundings and time. Thus in S. V. IV, Vasantaka describes the sights of the garden.[3] *The Vidusaka always speaks in the Prakrt dialect,* let us remember.

(ii) The Vidusaka appears to be a man of wide experience and keen observation. He is made responsible for some of the best sayings. It is a speciality with him to summarise, in pithy phrases, social experience and outlook. Strangely enough, in his; early days he is one of those shrewd men who know what to say and when and where. Thus in the Mrchh. Ill he protests that he is not such a fool as not to know when and where to joke (yatha niama aham murkhah tat kim parihasasya api deSakalam na janami). When a right thing is done in a right way, the Vidusaka is not slow to appreciate it. In the S. V. he compliments the King on his proposed visit to Pkdmavati as that lady is suffering from headache. " Behaviour begets behaviour " is his word of wisdom. (Satkaro hi nama satkarespa pratista!b pritim utpadayati). Similarly, in his usual homely allusions could be, seen his keen power of observation. That the Vidusaka was keen and clever is borne out by some of the later classical plays which retain this trait of his. Thus, however different the three Vidusakas in the three plays of Kalidasa might be, all of them are men of experience! .and observation and could give utterance to simple arid sensible truisms.[4] The fact that the Vidusaka is a Brahmin partly explains and is partly explained by this feature. A Brahmin was then generally respected as the repository of knowledge and experience; and a Brahmin was the only one qualified to teach and

3. Also cf. Rat. I, A. Sak. II, Malav. Ill, Mrchh. VI, etc.
4. For a further analysis of Kalidas's Vidtusaka, see Chapter XIIL..

criticise. In a Brahmin Vidusaka therefore any statement would both be understandable and justifiable. Instances might be multiplied to show how the Vidusaka *and the Vidusaka alone* is made the mouth-piece of common-sense truths. The following would give an idea of Kalidasa's Vidusaka.

(i) lotrena grhitasya kumbhilakasya asti va prativacanam—What could a thief caught red-handed say? (Vik. II)

(ii) pravrn-nadi iva a-prasanna gata devi—The Queen is as disturbing (i.e. enraged) as a river in rainy season. (Vik. II)

(iii) chinna-hasto matsye palayite drvin.no dhivaro bhanati dharmo me bhavisyati iti—The dejected fisherman, when the fish escapes him, might say he has done a meritorious deed, in not killing it. (Vik. Ill)

(iv) alam atra ghrnaya apanadhi Sisanayah—Show no mercy. An offender must be punished. (Vik. V)

(v) kadapi satpurusah soka-vaktavya na bhavanti, nenu pravate pi niskampla girayah—Good (or great) men never give way to sorrow. Mountains do not tremble even in storms. (A. sak. VI)

(vi) pandita-paritosa-pratyaya nanu mudha jatih—It is the fools that are always goaded by the approbation of the learned. (Malav. II)

(vii) na khalu mata-pitarau bhartrviyogaduhkhitam duhitaram drastum paarayatah—No parents could ever stand the miserable plight of their daughter separated from her husband, (ibid).

(viii) daridra atura iva vaidyena upanjyamanam ausadham ichhasi—You are like a poor patient who longs for a doctors medicine. (Malav. II)

(iii) The Vidusaka is not merely an experienced man but his experience is cast in a typically Hindu outlook. He is a confirmed fatalist. It is probable that he is usually called a " Vaidheya "—which means not so much a fool as a firm believer in " Vidhi" or fate. The half-pathetic and the half-comic situations and sentiments of his reveal " a man that Fortune's buffets and rewards hath taken " trith no thanks. How piteously he complains in the Mrchh. that every-

thing goes wrong with him! (mama punar brahmanasya sarvam eva viparitam parioamati). Neither in the S. V. nor in the A. Sak. do we find the Vidiisaka on the stage to witness the happy reunion of the hero and the heroine. It is quite characteristic of him to be the unwilling victim of both pain and pleasure. What wonder then if he were to believe that against the freaks of fate a human being is helpless ? " Who can challenge Fate ? Everything is so and so, i.e. as destined " (anati-kramantfyo hi vidhhe IdpSam idanfim etat) are his words of consolation to the king in the S. V. Similarly in the A. Sak. VI, he consoles King Dusyanta saying that Fate is ever powerful (bhavitavyata khalu balavatl). This feeling of helplessness and this fatalistic outlook of the Vidusaka could be instructively compared with the unrealistic ravings and bragging of the hero—as he is usually found to be doing in! most plays.

(iv) The fore-going is sufficient to show that the Vidusaka is an experienced Brahmin of a fatalistic and resourceful nature. How or why is it that the Vidusaka is always supposed to be, and in later Sanskrit plays is always represented as, a fool ? Why was a traditionally cultured Brahmin required to play a cultivated fool ? How did a Brahmin come to be a Vidusaka and how! did a Vidusaka turn into a perverted fool? These are the questions to be considered before a correct understanding of that character could be had.

Why was a Brahmin, in the first place, introduced as the Vidfl§aka ? The answer to this question has been already suggested above. The character of the hero was invariably too exalted from the point of view of social status and besides, the hero as he is represented in almost all the Sanskrit plays is " His Amorousness " first and " His Highness or Majesty" next. In all these plays, moreover, it is the private life and leanings of the hero that are to be represented. Would such a royal hero condescend to talk of his love affairs to the ordinary characters introduced on the stage ? Could the ministers and the memals and the maid-servants be deemed qualified to talk openly with or about the hero in his love affairs ? True, the heroine is the fittest person in this respect But die is too shy and too noble to talk freely with or about the hero. Moreover she is the end and not the means of the development of the love-story. Who but a Brahmin, then, could, be more suitable to carry out this responsibility? By birth he belongs to the highest caste; by his caste, he has distinctive

privileges and immunities. This sense of immunity helps to bring out the characters and the situation in bolder relief. The Brahmin Vidusaka would be a friend of a status sufficiently high for the king and would also justify *the* confidence placed in him. Thus in the- earliest plays, we would imagine! the character of a Brahmin introduced. This character must have served the purpose of painting the hero in contrast to as well as in some life like aspects. This is the reason why the Vidusaka, in all Sanskrit plays, speaks in a prakrt dialect. He interprets the cultured and the cultivated sentiments of the hero to the populace.

For the functions he had to perform, it was not necessary that the Vidusaka should be either learned or pedantic. Oftentimes, as in the Avi. II of Bhasa, he is called an avaidika (i.e. a heterodox fellow); he quotes the epic Ramayana as a natyasastra (a book on dramaturgy) and he compares himself to an uncultured prostitute (prakrta-ganika). The various names of his in the different plays are in themselves evidence to show that he made no claims to- traditional or cultural learnings. Such names as Vasantaka, Madhavya, Manavaka, Maitreya, etc. have no association with the prominent names in the history of Bnahmanic culture and learning. In the plays, too, the responsibilities of the Vidusaka were not directed either at holy purposes and functions or at any communication with the higher worlds. What was needed of him was more of common sense, and paradoxical as it might seem, the Vidusaka had a fund of common-sense. Moreover, for the chief and lively purpose of helping, his hero-friend in his love-affairs, the Vidusaka had to be a man. loving intrigue and scandal. As a Brahmin he had an inborn capacity for intrigue and scandal. As a member of the highest caste he could poke his nose into any affair and he could talk with an irresponsible laxity. It was this capacity for intrigue andi scandal that probably earned for him the name " Vidusaka " meaning " a scandal-monger " (lit. one who spoils or disfigures). Thus in Malav. I., the king speaks of his friend Vidusaka as a karyantara-saciva, i.e. a counsellor in a different sort of affairs. Similarly in the same play the younger queen refers to the Vidusaka as Kamatantra-saciva, i.e. a counsellor in love-affairs (IV).

We can now see as to how or why the Vidusaka deteriorated into a classical fool. The nature of the responsibilities he had to carry out brought him into closer and closer contact with the female

world, high and low, in the play. From the plays of Bhasa to those of sri Harsa the Vidusaka moves in thce world of the harem and the maid-servants. It is in these circumstances and not when he is with the king that the Vidusaka plays the fool, He had to be amusing if he had to achieve his purpose. Being a clever mail, he knows his jokes with the maids and the menials, as well as with the hero and the heroine. It is the increasing association of the Vidusaka with the menials of the harem that is responsible for conveniently turning him into a fool. Stupidity is the price paid by the Vidu§aka to gain access into the world of the heroine and her associates. One must be a deserving hero or a harmless fool to seek the company and the confidence of the beauties of the harem.

There is yet another feature that might explain .why the Vidugaka had to be a fool. It has long been the tendency of dramatists to represent their hero as a successful adventurer against innumerable odds. To be a hero one has not only to meet but plunge into dangers ; nay, the greater the number of dangers the nobler hero one would be. Naturally all sorts of dangers and complications were placed in a hero's path. Some playwrights after Bhasa utilised the Vidfl$aka in creating such complications. In adding to the complications the Vidusaka was only carrying out his original responsibility of showing the hero in noblest colours. The complications created by him, an unfortunate pessimist and fatalist as he was, could be •expected to be unfortunate, ill-placed and hence comic. It was only a question of time that a Vidusaka who created such unfortunate situations should be called a fool. Thus in the Vik. II he commits the folly of letting out the secret of King Vikrama's love for Urvasi. In the M51av. IV he talks aloud in his sleep and lets a similar secret out. In Rat. of course, he is made to commit series of systematic andl stereotyped follies. It is, however, only in some of the later plays like those of King Harsa that the Vidusaka is the *traditional perfect fool* Once he became that he ceased to be of any significance in a play. If the Vidusaka is to be a perfect fool from the very beginning how could he serve as a medium between the hero and the audience, or between the hero and the heroine ? How could he be expected to raise laughter by his semi-cynical generalisations and his fresh and ill-placed sallies ? How could he interpret the finer sentiments in popular language ? He could do none of these. Humiliated, worn out and superfluous he became at sort of a laughing stock for the audience with his nose crooked, his limbs

deformed and his jokes stale. He lost; his position and possibilities, his power and his freshness. Even before the play *began.* we could Icnow what he was going to say. He had grown too old to say anything new.

• * *

To complete the story of the Vidusaka, reference will have to be made to his successors. The original Vidusaka, died out. The purpose, however, for which he was originally required in a play remained. This want was filled by some later dramatists of power and originality by creating other characters. It is, however, to the credit of the Vidusaka that no single character could replace him. Nowhere else could be found that combination of the smiles and the sorrows, of the fun and the freaks of life. In the MM. of Bhavabhuti, the character of Kamandaki is akin to the earlier Vidusaka. Like him, she brings the different traits of the hero and the heroine to the notice of the audience, she introduces comic situations and she is a respectable lady of keen observation and wide experience. There was, however, no time for experimenting any further. Sanskrit, as a language, had died out long before Bhavabhuti. Soon after Sanskrit ceased to be even a fashion.

* * *

The Vidusaka could thus be said to have been introduced in Sanskrit Drama from the early days. The very nature of the plot and of the hero required that he, the Vidusaka, should be a Brahmin busybody, moving in aristocratic circles, where scandal and intrigue are usually rife. With the gradual change in life and manners he was first stereotyped and then taken to pieces where all the active elements were reduced to dull technicalities In the evolution of Sanskrit Drama itself the character of the Vidusaka had a place and a function. By the side of the hero, the Vidusaka is both the sutradhara and the Nati. He introduces the story and amuses the audience. Like the vikambhaka and the pravesaka, he serves the purpose of informing the audience of the incidents mainly connected with the hero and supposed to have happened during the interval.[5] In this respect, he recalls to our mind the chorus of the Greek plays. The Vidusaka has stronger affinities to the chorus than has the

5, Cf. A. Sak. Opening of Act II.

prastavanla or the sutradhiara. He is the only character who offers the dramatists a most convenient, powerful, and happy chance to moralize. So did the Greek chorus. Above all, it (the chorus) " gave the poet an opportunity of commenting and moralizing upon the' progress of the events in the play proper." It should be added that the Vidusaka, alone in the dramatic world, could boast of "commenting and moralizing on the progress of the events" not only "in the play proper" but in life itself on the whole. Not merely does he instruct us from a height but he does interest and amuse us **from** our very midst.

CHAPTER XI

EARLY PLAYS

(Bhasa).

In the foregoing chapters we have described, with relevant details, some,of the earliest features viz., the Sutradhara, the prastavana, the Vidusaka etc. in the development of Sanskrit Drama. We shall now turn to the study of some of the earliest plays themselves. The task here is more difficult. Chronology is the one stumbling block in the course of the history of Sanskrit literature. It is unfortunate indeed that a literature that can boast of great thinkers like the authors of the Upanisads, of great story-tellers like the authors of the two epics and of inspired poets like Kalidasa—should leave in its trail no information at all as to the time and life of these accomplished writers. In spite of the honest and laborious research work of the Western as well as of the Eastern scholars we are still groping in the dark region of "probabilities." The meagreness of the material data, too, has been responsible, to an extent, for the mischief of fanciful imagination or of prejudiced dogmatism.

Nor is this all. Though we know nothing, for example, of the personal history of Kalidasa, we are fortunate enough to know that he is the undisputed author of the great play—the Abhijiiana Sakuntalam; though we cannot say definitely when and where Pajniini lived, we know this much for certain that there is no one else to challenge his authorship of the first systematic grammar of the world. These writers are fortunate indeed when compared to certain others who are sometimes denied even the credit of authorship.

One of such latter is the dramatist Bhasa. That there was a dramatist named Bhasa is undoubted. That he was a great dramatist is equally undoubted on the evidence of Kalidasa's Malav. mentioned already. From Bana (7th century A.D.) and Rajasekhara (11th Century A. D.) we know that Bhasa was a well recognised' dramatist. But it was only quite recently that Mahamahopadhyaya T. Ganapati Sastri published, in the Trivendrum Sanskrit Series, some thirteen plays which he ascribed to Bhasa. These plays should give us an idea of the early Sanskrit stage provided they are the works of Bhasa referred to by Kalidasa and others. Unfortunately Bhasa's

authorship is not unchallenged. At present, there are three views on this question :

(1) the one that insists that all the plays are the works of Bhiasa.
(2) the second that insists as vigorously that none of the thirteen plays could be ascribed to Bhasa and
(3) the third that insists on not insisting either way, i.e. which believes in a; careful and compromising study.

The Editor of the T. S. S. was am ardent advocate of the first view. In his introduction he has shown certain " peculiar" features as common to all the thirteen plays and has based his conclusion on these. The features referred to are as follows :—

(a) All the plays open with the same stage direction—nandyante tatab pravisati sutradharah : " after the benedictory verse enter the Sutradftara."
(b) The prologue, in all the thirteen plays, is called Sthapana and not Prastavana
(c) Usually, in all the later classical Sanskrit plays the dramatist mentions in the prologue his name, fame etc. (cf. the plays of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Visakhadatta, Sudraka, Bhatta Narayajna etc). But all these thirteen plays agree in the fact that there is, in the Prologues, no mention at all of the author etc.
id) The *bharata-vakya* ends everywhere with the prayer "May the mighty King rule over the whole earth." (imiam api mahim krtsniam rajasimhah prasastu nah).
(e) A structural similarity obtains in some of the plays ; e.g. in the opening verse the names of the characters are interwoven, a figure of speech technically called the *mudralamkara.*
(f) There are deviations from the rules of Bharata and Pacini.

It is not within the scope of the present work to discuss the above points and their implications. One thing is certain viz., the style of all these plays shows that they are essentially meant to be represented on the stage. The *nandi* verse (see point (a) above) belongs more to the actors than to the author. It is part of the stage-worship by the actors. The opening verse of a play is the author's and hence it cannot be said to be a *nandi.* In the case of

the opening verse, therefore, "the definition of a *nandi* does not apply" says Viswaniatha. "So we find (in a play like the Vik.), that some older manuscripts read the first verse after the stage direction 'nandyante' i.e. after the *nandi"* [1] It is drily an illustration to show that the six features which the Mahamahopadhyaya finds peculiar are either insignificant or not to be found in each and every play, nor are they usually to be found all in one and the same play.

On the other hand, there are some obvious grounds to believe that the authorship of these plays belongs to more than one persoa In the first place, the S. V., the P. Y., the P. R., and the Prat, are the only plays that show all the six " peculiar" features described above. Secondly, these four plays can be distinguished from the remaining nine on the ground of the preponderating number of 61oka verses in the former.[2] Thirdly, may be mentioned the fact viz., that characterisation in these two groups is of such a different nature as to warrant different authorship. The Prat, and the Abhi., for example, are both based on the Ramayana story, and yet there is a significant difference in the two plays with reference to Rama's character. In the Prat., Rama is great because he is an ideal son, an ideal brother and an ideal husband. All his actions and thoughts are such as are within the sphere of mortal activity. In the Abhi., on the other hand, Rama is God incarnate. In a number, of places he is mentioned as such. In Act I Sugriva addresses Rama as " deva, —God ! " (1-8); Rama is 'Sridhara; he is the Lord Madhusudana himself, irrespective of anachronism (prabhur va madhusudanah 1-32); he is the Lord of the Universe (bhuvanaikaniatha 111-21), Lord of men (nrdeva, 111-27), Lord- (deva, IV, 13-14) Puru§ottama (VI, 27-28) and finally he is completely identified with Visi?u (visnur bhavan, VI 30-31). Likewise a contrast could be observed between the P.R. on the one hand and the M.V., the D.V., the D.G., the K.B., and U.B. on the other. (All these six are based on the Mahabharata episode). Kiigna is a divinity *par excellence* in the last five plays. In the D. V. he is identified with Visnu and

1. evam adisu nandi-laksaniayogat. ata eva praktana-pustakesu " nandyante sutradhsrah" ityanantaram eva "vedantesu" ityadi Sloka-lekhanam drSyate. (IS, D. p. 28).

2. For a further analysis of these plays see the present writer's contributions to the Indian Antiquary, Vol. LX, 1931 pp. 41-45 and the Bulletin of the Sanskrit Literary Association, Karnatak College, Dharwar for the year 1930-31.

the four divine weapons, personified, are introduced on the stage. In the D.G., Kjwa is Lord Niar&ya|oa. In the U.B., Duryodhana of all —he who had thousand and one grievances against Krsna—declares in his dying breath that in being killed by Krsna he was killed by "Hari, the beloved (Lord) of the World" (jagatah priyena harnia 35). The Bal. is full of miracles from the very beginning. Lastly may be mentioned an important technical difference between the twa groups. The Prologue is called Sthapan in the four plays of the first group. Of the second group the K. B. has the words ' iti prastavana' instead of 'iti sthapana'; the D. G., in the opening verse, uses the word " prastiavania " in connection with a nataka and the Sutradhara. " May the Lord who is the sutradhara that introduces and develops the eternal drama of the three worlds protect us."[3] From such references would it be too much to infer that the two groups are not only not the works of one and the same author but that they belong to two entirely different times, the first group being earlier and the second (wherein are to be found elements like the prastavana, the defication etc.) later? It was shown above how the Sutradhara was the earliest and the prastavania a later technical element in the development of Sanskrit Drama. In that case, we can reasonably believe that the four plays of the first group belong to a period much earlier than that of the remaining nine. Though, among the thirteen plays, we find some earlier and some later, we can reasonably believe that all the thirteen belong to the earliest period in the history of Sanskrit Drama. (Those attributed to Aswaghosa might be earlier still, but as they are not available except in fragments, they do not much affect the present statement.)' It is for this reason that we find among the thirteen plays certain deviations from the rules of both Panini and Bharata. The N. S. is an elaborate treatise, which presumes a sufficiently developed stage. It would be unreasonable, therefore, to expect the earliest plays to accord with the rules of later treatises!

There is another circumstance which speaks of the antiquity of the plays under consideration ; it is the style and the treatment. In none of these plays do we find a highly artistic development. It is, as in the case of the epics, the story of narration that is more interesting than the art of narration. Nay, the fact that most of the

3. loka-traya-virata-nataka-vastu-tantra-
prastavana-pratisamapana-sutradharab.

plays treat of the epic episodes would tempt one to believe that these plays drew inspiration directly from the epics. The popularity of the employment of the epic metre strengthens still more such a belief. We have seen already ho^r Sanskrit Drama owes its origin to the epic recitation. In the face of such circumstances would it not be reasonable to hold that these plays, based so essentially as they are on the epic style and subject-matter, represent, almost certainly, the earliest stage of Sanskrit Drama ? Even those deviations from the rules of Pacini, could then be leasonably understandable—since the plays must have been written in the popular style of the epics. It is interesting to note in this connection that in the K. B. one MS. reads *kavacankam samaptam* (thus ends the Armour Act) instead of karna-bharam" avasitam (thus ends the play karna-bhara). Similarly, three out of the five MSS. of the Abhi. read *Sri ramayanam samdptam* (thus ends the holy Ramayana) instead of abhi-.sekanatiakam samaptam (thus ends the play Abhiseka). All these facts justify one to conclude that there must have been an attempt to dramatize the epic episodes. Similar attempts might have been made with the Ramiayana, though we have only the Prat, and the Abhi. (which, be it noted, cover between themselves the whole Rama story.)[4] Such a tendency is easily understandable. From the very beginning the epics had attained an unparalleled popularity. Even in modern India the recitation of the two epics is carried on with sanctimonious regularity. If we bear in mind that the form of narration in the epics, especially in the Mbh., is predominantly that of dialogues, we should not be surprised at the attempts to dramatize the episodes therein. The task was not only tempting and inspiring but an easy one. The earliest dramas are thus merely the first attempts of the Suta to popularise the epics by representing their themes on the stage. It is somewhat interesting to note that a legend speaks of Bhasa as a dhavaka i.e. a man of lower social status. Bhasa might not have been an actual sita of the epic traditions but he might have been of a sufficiently low origin, and further, sufficiently qualified to continue the suta-tradition of popularising the epics. Unless we take these plays as the earliest attempts in this direction, we cannot satisfactorily explain defects in technique like

4. The story of Rama is to be found even in the Mahabharata (III). As a matter of fact the Abhi. ending with the coronation of Rama, covers the entire story as narrated in the Mbh. The abandonment of Sita etc. are *not to be found* in the Rama story of the Mbh.

disregard of time or place side by side with poetry of a high quality. Drama as such was still in its infancy. We find herein more of the epic style of narration than that of artistic arrangement. In plays like the M. V., the D. G., the U. B., the Bal etc. there are fights on the stage which are half-artistic. In the Bal. (Ill) we have a reference to dance (halliSaka) and music (litodya). In the same play (V) there is boxing of Canura and Mustika. In the U. B. (9) we read :

carim gatim pracarati praharatyabhiksiiam
samsiksite narapatir balavianstu bhimah

" The King (i.e. Duryodhana) is graceful in his steps and quicker on the weapon; he is a trained fighter ; but Bhima has more of physical strength."

The words *can* (a dance-step) and *samsiksiia* (trained) show that dancing, as an art, had found a place in dramatic representation. Bharata is not so unreasonable when he says that the first performance was a samavakara representing the fight of the Gods with the demons. The brilliant device of introducing dance on the stage as in Kalidiasa's Mai. has here its crude beginnings.

CHAPTER XII

MAIN TENDENCIES

(A) *Social Conditions.*

In the last chapter an attempt was made to show that the thirteen plays ascribed to Bhasa belonged to the earliest period in the history of Sanskrit dramatic literature. Whether all thirteen are, or are not, written by Bhasa, is immaterial for the present purpose viz., to find out the relation of these plays to contemporary social life. Since no one date is, universally or with certainty, accepted, it is better to view the question from another point of view i.e. to find out the social conditions as reflected in the thirteen plays.

Could we presume, in the first place, that a dramatist does necessarily represent contemporary social life and manners? Does he represent the world as it is or as he finds it or as he would like to find it? Though it is difficult to answer these questions, it might be asserted, in the present context, that a good dramatist could not avoid depicting the tendencies, if not the tangibilities, of his times. It is more in the details and development than in the plot or presentation proper that one could reasonably detect the social and cultural background of the dramatist.

From such a point of view, the society represented in these thirteen plays seems to be comparatively a primitive one. The conception of society as such, as we have it now, is still not to be found. It is the family, the group of blood-relationship that is recognised in a sort of social aspect. Family, forming the one group of co-operation, is idealised. The sanctity and the claims and the traditions of the family come above all. Each and every member of the family owes allegiance to the family. It is his bounden duty to respect and preserve the family traditions. The thirteen plays under discussion are scrupulous and unanimous in this respect. In the P. R., for example, a family is said to be ruined even if an individual member misbehaves. "A man with no character burns away his family" 01-12): "Members of a family will have to run away if one of them loses character" (1-12)[1] In the Prat., when Rama, the legitimate heir to the throne, is duly crowned his brother Satrughna says "By this coronation of my elder brother, the stain on our family is

wiped out" (VII-13). Similarly, in the Abhi. Vali, the monkey-chief, entreats from his death-bed that his brother Sugriva should continue the good traditions of his family.

vimucya rosam parigrhya dharmam
kula-pravalam parigrhyatam nah.[1]

"Give up your anger and take up, according to Dharma, our family traditions."

In the same play, Sita prays: that her husband be victorious if she has never violated the high family traditions.[2]

With this attitude towards the family it is no surprise if blood-relationship is held in high sanctity. Members of a family are always believed to be identical not only in conduct and character but even in the details of their physical features. Instances, even at random, might be multiplied., Remarks like *aho svarasddrsyam—oho rupa-sadrsyam*—Oh ! what a resemblance of voice ! of form and figure ! etc. are strewn over. Oftentimes they seem quite far-fetched and ridiculous. Thus in the Prat. (IV) Sita goes forward to meet Bharata; but the resemblance between the brothers Rama[1] and Bharata is so close that she mistakes the latter for her husband ! In the M.V., the voice of Ghatotkaca misleads Bhlma who takes him for one of Arjuna's sons (since the children of two brothers would belong to the same generation) while Ghaltotkaca is the son of Bhima, himself. Blood is so important that it could determine, on its own strength, even the character of an individual. For this reason the queen in the Avi. is surprised that a heroic youth, who rescues her daughter, should be an *antyaja*—a low caste fellow.[8]

Family was thus the recognised social unit. This fact is significant in another respect. It helped to determine the place of a woman in a society. A woman from her very birth, was a problem. " A father of a daughter to be married has enough to worry about says the king in the Avi. (I). A woman, too, could destroy a family by her misconduct. A woman's faults cost the good name of a family. " By the fault of a woman a good man, in a bad family,

1. Abhi. 1-26.
2. iswarah, atmanah kula-sadrsena caritrena yadi aham anusarami arya-putram, aryaputrasya vijayo bhavatu (Abhi. V).
3. akulinah katham evam sanukroso bhavet How could a low-bom man be so sympathetic? Avi. I.

is destroyed " (nivislte duskule siadhub stridoseneva dahyate. (P.R 1-14). A woman's capacity to destroy was greater than that of a man. In her life-time a woman would be a member of two families —that of her parents in the beginning and that of her husband later. The King in the Avi. says as much : kuladvayam hanti madena nari, A woman, by her bad behaviour, destroys two families " (1-3). As for the girl herself, the time before marriage was happier than that afterwards. For this reason, the female-friend in the S. V. tells Padmavati to enjoy before she is given away in marriage, (nirvar-tyatam tavad ayam kanyabhavaramaniyah kalaft, I.). Once married, the girl became merely the property of her husband. In the Prat Laksmaiia does not attempt to dissuade Sita from following her husband to the forest. Why should he? "A wife is her husband's property " (bhartr-natha hi naryali, Prat. 1-25). In addition to this general privilege of being treated as a chattel, a woman of aristo-cratic traditions enjoyed the right to live a sequestered or purdah (avagunthana, Prat. I) life.

The married woman, however, was compensated in some ways for this loss of human rights. Within the four walls of a family she wielded authority and commanded high respect as a mother. Even Ghatotkaca, a being of Raksasa traditions, speaks highly of a mother's position.

mata hi manusyanam daivatianam ca daivatam

" A mother is a deity indeed to men as well as to gods " (M.V. .37).

The chief characters in all these plays are more usually address-ed under a maternal appellation. Thus Rama, Laksmana and Bha-rata are addressed as *kausalydmdtab* (one whose mother is Kausalya), *sumitramdtah*, and *kaikeyi-matali* respectively; Duryodhana is *gandhari-matah,* Kamsa and Vasudeva address each other (Bal.) as *Sauraseni-indtah* and *yadavt-matah* respectively. Where a married woman enjoyed such honourable position there was no place for some early and less refined practices like the niyoga—the " levirate " sys-tem. Rama, in the Abhi., accuses Vali of unlawfully living with his own younger brother's wife. "Never should an elder brother live with his younger brother's wife" (na tveva hi kadacit jyesfthasya yaviyaso darabhimarsanam—I).

The only other social unit, bigger than the family and closely knit on the same ties as blood-relationship and heredity was the

caste. The Brahmins and the Kaatriyas are referred to as the higher and the more important classes. The Brahmin, however, has an undecided superiority over all others. In the P.R., the universally respected Bhiama himself says that Draoa is superior since "you (i.e. Drcna) are a Brahmin and I a Ksatriya." (dvijo bhavan ksat~ riya-vaimsaja vayam P.R. 1-27). Even Kama in the K.B. says that he would never go against a Brahmin (brahmana-vacanam iti na maya atikranta-purvam). Circumstances too are such as to justify a Brahmin's superiority. Sacrifices must have been still in vogue as it would appear from the enthusiasm and the elaborateness in which they are described at the opening of the P. R. People believed in the efficacy of the Vedic rites.[4] In every way the customs, conventions and superstitions in vogue speak of a well-established priestcraft. Oftentimes the very plot of a play is highly illustrative in this respect. The story in the S.V. and in the P.Y. is possible only because the minister Yaugandharayana believes in the fortune telling of a Siddha. Similarly, Kaikeyi in the Prat, takes upon herself the unpleasant task of sending Rama and others into exile in order that a sage's curse may not be falsified. Her own words (VI) are definite r apariharauiiyo maharsisapab putra-vipraviasam vina na bhavati. " The curse of a sage could not be averted, nor was it possible (to minimise its dangerous results) except by sending the son into exile." In such a society of customs and conventions and ritualism a Brahmin was expected to be well-versed in so many lores. Thus, Ravana, disguised as a Brahmin in the Prat, mentions the various lores he knows, Mann's Code of Law, Maheswara Yoga, the Politics of Brhaspati, the Nyaya of Medhiatithi, and the Pracetasa rules in ritualism (sriaddha-kalpa). Teaching centres, too, must have existed. In the S.V. I, the sisya mentions Lavanaka in the *Vatsa* country as a centre of education.

The life of the Ksatriyas, on the other hand, seems to have been a hard one. From the S.V. and the Avi. one could easily see that the country was divided into a number of petty principalities. A Ksatriya was brought up in a martial atmosphere. To fight was his one creed in life. It was either to die or kill on the battlefield but never to be defeated. Thus the old king Virata in the P.R. says that

4. Cf. hutam ca dattam ca tathaiva tisthati " Whatever is offered in a sacrifice or is given in charity lasts eternally, i.e. brings eternal bliss" (K. B. 22).

he would acquire fame if he dies or in case he releases the ccws from the enemies he would acquire merit, (nidhanam api yasas syat mok-§ayitvia to dharmali—P.R. II, 5). Similarly, the boy Abhinwtnyu says that a hero must either die or conquer on the battlefield (ava-syam yudhi viranam vadho via vijayo 'tha via—P.R. Ill, 5).

Political life under such circumstances cannot but be very un-settled. A Ksatriya prospered according to his power. So, as in the S.V. and the Avi., we always find a king quarrelling with his neigh-bour. A Ksatriya's career was in his weapons, (banadhina ksatriya-nam pravrddhih,'—P.R. I, 24). Any adventurer could carve out a kingdom for himself. No wonder that Duryodhana ridicules the Pandavas when the latter negotiate for a share in the kingdom.

rajyam nama nrpatmajaih sahrdayair jitva ripum bhujyate
tal loke na tu yacyate na tu punar diniaya va' diyate
(D.V. 24).

" Princes should conquer their enemies and then rule and enjoy a kingdom. Nobody ever begs for a kingdom nor does any one give it in charity.'"

Even after conquering, it was not so easy to maintain it. Each and every prince was waiting to grab it at the earliest opportunity. So, in the Prat., Rama advises his brother Bharata not to neglect the kingdom for a moment, (rajyam nama muhurtam api na upekdani-yam. Prat. IV). Conspiracies might be hatched within the very walls of the! palace. So even Sita:, is slightly cynical when she hints that intrigues region in palaces (bahu-vrttantiani rajakulani nama. Prat. I); justice, popularity, leniency etc. are more in the diplomacy than in the doctrines of the day. It is difficult to see the motive of the old king Viraita when he feels ashamed to levy taxes without offering protection in return, (nirlajjo mama ca karah karani bhunkte, P.R. II, 3). The virtuous protection is so ill-placed. The freedom of style and the frequency of situations in which fights are usually des-cribed in these plays, the way in which Vali is killed on the stage (Abhi. I) or that in which Kairhsa dashes, presumably on the stage, a baby against a rock (Bal. I)—all this shows the roughness of the path that led to the throne.

The unsettled political conditions are further reflected in the bias against town-life. The plays rarely let go a chance of showing disgust towards the turbidity and the turbulence of town-life. When people are being pushed away even in the forest with the roughness

of policemen Yaugandhamyapja exclaims—upavanam gramlkaroti ajnayia. " Authority " (i.e. the use of it) is turning the forest precincte into a town" (S.V. I, 3). Similarly, the sight of dust and din is immediately associated with a town, (vanam idam nagaiikaroti —this forest is changing into a city. Part. VII-4.)

In such a society it is a satisfaction to find that art has advocacy and appreciation. Dancing is very frequently mentioned and introduced in the Bal. Even when **a** fight is going on the spectators dc not fail to notice the graceful steps of the fighters. Thus in the Abhi., VI, 14 the Vidyiadhara notices the fighters stepping a cari (darfbhir etan parivartamianan). Music, too, held a high place. Queen Vasavadatta in the S.V. is said to play on the *vim.* In the Avi., too, the hero is a connoisseur of music (Act II). In the prologue to the Prat, the naitS is called on the stage for no other purpose than singing. Painting was another art which had worked up its place to the royal courts. Thus in the D.V. Durycdhana is looking at the picture wherein the episode of Draupad! being dragged by hair is sketched. The words in which he describes the picture are sufficiently technical to show that painting was appreciated and cultivated as an art : aho asya varnjadhyata aho asya bhavspannata, aho yuktalekhata. " What a proper placing in the colour. How fittingly does it convey the feelings ! Oh, how proportionate are the lines and the perspective ! " Lastly, drama and staging are mentioned in connection with extraordinary or festive occasions. Thus at the time of Rama's coronation, in Prat. I, the mails are making arrangements in the music hall (sangfta salia). The actors (called natakl-ya-s) have been asked to represent **a play. What** is **still** more **inte-**Testing, the **actors have been instructed to select such** a **play as would** suit the occasion (kalasamvadina natakena). Would it be too much to believe that play-acting had reached **a** stage where[1] it could meet the demands not only of the audience but of the occasion ?

* * *

(B) *Tendencies of the Early Drama.*

The history of social life sketched so far should, if it were known to us in some first-hand **authoritative form, have been the background of our study. As it is, the intriguing situation arises of first reconstructing such a history from such a literary material and then studying those very literary models in the light of the history thus reconstructed. As Carlyle** says, **"In any** measure **to understand**

the poetry, to estimate its worth and historical meaning, we ask, as a quite fundamental inquiry : what that situation was ? Thus the History of a Nation's Poetry is the essence of its History, political, economic, scientific, religious."[5] Thus, with no desire to offer any further justification, it would be noted as the only method of an honest study.

In what relation do the thirteen plays, under question, stand to the society depicted above ? How far do they represent the contemporary social tendencies? What place do they occupy in the history and development of drama as an art? These are some of the questions to be answered here. That the drama was recognised as a cultured entertainment for the rich and the poor alike is evident from Prat. I referred to above. Singing and dancing had already been incorporated in the acted play. There is only one thing which strikes even a casual reader of these plays. All the plays are prominent in betraying their inspiration mainly from tradition. The story of King Vatsa (the S.V. and the P.Y.) on one hand and those from the epics, on the other, go to prove that the avowed object of the dramatist is to sing the glories of the highest god and of the highest man of Vedic traditions. The cult of sacrifice is upheld and applauded (P. R, I). The gods of the heroic age—Rama and Krsna—are the subjects of devotion and description in the Prat., the Abhi. and the Bal. The very godliness of the gods is that handed down by the epics. Of the two, Krsna, is a greater favourite since he is identified, more frequently than Rama, with the highest God. It is Krsna again to whom the divine miracles are attributed (Bal).

That the epics influenced these, early plays to an essential extent is obvious not only from the stories but from the style in which they are depicted. Narration and description, as in the epics, still form the foremost feature. Features that distinguish drama from literary are in general not prominent yet. Construction and characterisation are still in a nascent stage. Some scenes here and there have in them the making of dramatic art : e.g. (1) in the S.V. the King dreams about his first queen whom he believes to be dead but who as the audience knows, is still alive though disguised and is actually present on the stage ; (2) the way in which Bharata, in the Prat, comes to know of his father's death from the latter's carved figure in the House of the Dead ; or (3) the scene where Abhimanyu the

5. Miscellanies, iii, pp. 292-3.

son of Arjuna, is brought face to face, in the P.R., with his father and uncles who are living incognito just then. Such scenes, however, are not only rare, but are often introduced in crude abruptness and developed with no delicacy. Thus in the Prat, though the scene is dramatic, its very possibility is out of question. The time required to fetch Prince Bharata from the house of his maternal uncle is ridiculously short; but, in that short while, not only is King Da£a-ratha dead but his figure carved and placed in the House of the Dead (to top that, Bharata is aware of such a place for the first time !) It seems as if the roughness of the social life is reflected in the crudity of the plays. They are typical of the age in which they are written. They are virile, they are forceful, they move with speed and determination, but they lack that harmony and delicacy which alone could sustain the virility by making it attractive.

The social conditions seem, to some extent, to have checked the development of the art in one respect. The authors of all these plays are not only dramatists but teachers in morality. The lessons taught are, of course, elementary. It is that universal yet primitive sentiment which another great dramatist of another time was to express with due protests :

O thoughts of men, accurst
Past, and to come, seems best; things present worst.[6]

This fatalist outlook, an outlook more likely than any other to prove fatal to art, is to be discerned in all these plays. It is all the sadness and the wickedness of the world that are held before us as the curse of this life and the cause of the life destined to come. God has been represented throughout more as a punisher of the, wicked than as a protector of the good. Even the historical hero—King Vatsa—moves in a world of the evil inevitable. The youthful and heroic prince Avimaraka is labouring under the curse of a sage as he steps on the stage. It is true that most of the plays end in a happy union or re-union of the hero with the heroine. That is only a superficial aspect and should not lead us blindly to believe that all these plays are comedies, much less to generalise that tragedy in art is unknown to Sanskrit drama. Who could be deaf to the eloquent pleading of all these plays on behalf of man helplessly fighting against fate? The Vidusaka in S.V. (Act IV) is a true representative of the age and of the dramatist

6. **King Henry IV-ii, Act i, Sc. iii.**

when he sadly sings the tune, anatikramaniyo vidih, Idrsamidanim etat. " Fate is difficult to be overpowered ; well, 'tis so and so;" that even the greatest should, and shall, suffer is a sentiment expressed with conviction and consistency. This sentiment is the very element of tragedy in drama. It is only the fervent faith of Hinduism that saves the hero from being placed, as the Shakespearean tragic hero is,; in such circumstances that his fall is assured. The tragic element, however, is to be seen in the fact that the hero is placed high above all the characters before he is made to suffer. And here does the dramatist, assume the role of a teacher in morality. The wicked, of course, pay with life for their wickedness while good character in itself is no guarantee to any exemption from occasional or inevitable lapses.

The five one-act plays based on the episodes of the Mahiabharata lend support for admitting such a conception of tragedy. D.V., D.G., and U.B. are plays where Duryodhana is the central figure. He is not, however, the mean-minded, self-centred, sinful demon, that he is in| post-epic tradition. He is a true representative of the dramatist's age : arrogant, adventurous, consistently unscrupulous and brutally reasonable. Inevitable doom darkens round such a character as night that hovers slowly, phantom-like and fear-inspiring round the timid, and sinful hearts. The most noble Kanoa (in K.B.) is made a victim of his own nobility and all because he was chivalrous and sincere in siding with the wrong. This tragic element, as said above, was saved fateful conclusions because of faith on the one hand and of ignorance on the other. The Hindu mind defied history by! persisting in its belief of a happier life and a happier world to come. Present life and the earthly globe were presumed, at the very beginning, not to bring in any happiness. No hopes, no despairs ; no desires, no achievements. The character of the Vidusaka is symbolic of this attitude. He is a man destined to eternal disillusionment —where happiness is concerned. The hero and the heroine may be united, but he himself is never destined even to be present on such occasions (cf. S.V., A. sak., Vik. etc.). In thus creating a symbol for its age and its expression the drama of Bhasa's days could be said to have made the first advance towards art. The social surroundings were not as yet such as could ensure it a happy, rapid and healthy growth. Drama now was not so much a representation of man's life in the world as of man's position in the world. The dramatist desired not to construct the facts of life but to convey a sense of the forces in life.

CHAPTER XIII

KALIDASA

So far we have seen that the early Sanskrit plays (i) were more or less inspired by, and thus based on, the epics ; (ii) were narrative in form and development; (iii) were staged in the open as the absence of stage-directions indicates and for the very audience to which the Suta, in earlier days, recited the epics; and (iv), that the authors of these plays were first moralists and then artists, if at all. When we come to the next known period to be studied in this chapter, we notice a great change with respect to all these above four points.

If one were to speak on the evidence of plays available, one would say that from the first century B.C. or A.D. there was a complete blank. Is it possible that during these 300 years or so no dramatist was born or that Sanskrit drama was not at all encouraged ? It is true that, as history tells us, the cultured ascendancy during this period belonged not to the Aryan society in the north but to the Andhras, etc. i.e. to the adventurers of the non-Aryan community in the south. In spite of these circumstances, however, it seems that Sanskrit literature, *was* encouraged ; only, patronage now passed into the hands of the foreigners like the Scythians established in the west and of non-Aryan royal families like the Andhras etc. in the south. As has been suggested[1] already these foreigners, as the inscriptional evidence shows, extended whole-hearted patronage to Sanskrit literature and the Vedic traditions.

The evidence of the literary materials too leads to the same conclusion. The plays next available immediately after those studied so far are those of Kialidasa. In the prologue to one of his plays he refers to earlier dramatists of whom only Bhasa is known to us.[2] Secondly, the very' excellence of Kialidasa's plays presupposes many more earlier dramatists. Lastly, we have evidence in Kalidasa (as will be seen below) which shows that drama had been developing and had actually developed by his time to such an extent as to deteriorate into a fixed, lifeless form. It was the genius of this great

1. Vide infra. Chap. VIII.

2. prathita-yaSasam Masa-saumilla-kaviputradlnam prabandhaii. atikramya, etc. (Malav. Prologue)

dramatist that not only saved drama from degradation but raised it to an artistic source of joy—even at the risk of temporary (or con temporary unpopularity).[3]

Kalidasa is the reputed author of three Sanskrit plays—the Vikramorvasyam, the Malavikagnimitram and the Abhijnana Sakuntalam. The first and the last deal with stories from traditional mythology (purana) and traditional history (itihasa). The hero of the second mentioned play is King Agnimitra—the son of Pusyamitra who, in the early part of the second century B.C. founded the Sunga dynasty.[4] Thus it appears that even in Kalidasa the same tendency, as in the early days, is to be found in singing of the glorious past. That, however, would be a hasty judgment. Kalidasa, as could be seen from his plays, is first and foremost a student of art. In all his three plays singing, dancing, painting etc. are introduced in words and circumstances that reveal Kalidasa as an expert connoisseur and critic. What is more to the point is his views on drama. To him drama is not, as to the early writers, a popular method of preaching ; drama, he says, is the study and not the moral of life. It is the varied scope of such a study that makes drama interesting to the various tastes of the public. Music, dance, painting etc. do not attract each and all while drama, combining in itself, all these and dealings with the ways of the world, claims a greater audience than does any other art. " Here ", he says " is to be found the manifold ways of the world arising from the three qualities (i.e. the variety of tastes and talents); and hence, though varied in form and scope, drama is an entertainment common to people of different tastes."[5]

Under these circumstances one would be justified in expecting that Kalidasa would work *off the beaten track.* Is such an expectation fulfilled in his three plays ? It seems, on the whole, that Kalidasa eventually effected a revolution in the world of letters. Though, from the point of view of their plots, the three plays seem to belong to the antiquated, standardised type dealing with love-stories of traditional kings, one could see that the development and the construe-

3. It is not the object of the present work to discuss the age of Kalidasa ; the sort of internal evidence elaborated in this chapter would strengthen the view that assigns Kalidasa to the period of Samudra-Gupta or his son Chandra-Gupta II (373 A.D. to 415 A.D.).

4. Cf. C. H. I. Vol. I. p. 518.

5 traigunyodbhavam atra loka-caritam nanarasam drSyate, natyam bhinnarucer janasya bahudhapyekam samaradhanam (Malav. 1-4).

tion therein point to an entirely opposite conclusion. Nay, it seems that Kalidiasa deliberately selected the most popularly known stories so that he could divert all his skill towards their artistic construction. The audience already knew the story ; and imperceptibly and with no harm or disadvantage to the audience he left out the old narrative style.

It would be strange, indeed, if Kalidasa achieved all this at one stroke or in his very first play. In the three plays we notice a gradual, progressive adjustment of his art and conception ; and we also notice the painful struggle of an original mind with that Universal Ego—the dull and deadening conservatism. The partiality of Kalidiasa to music and dancing is consistently pronounced. In his very first play he assigned a great part to music and dancing. The only novel path he struck first was in that respect; but otherwise, his first play viz., the Vikramorvasyam is nearer to the standard type. The Malavikagnimitram is a further improvement on the Vik. For this reason, we are inclined to hold, against the more or less unanimous verdict of well-respected and authoritative scholars, that the Vik. and not the Malav. is the first of Klalidasa's plays. The poet in the Vik. is evidently younger than in the Malav. The very manner in which he craves the indulgence of his audience speaks of a diffident voice. Of course, he says, it is my play ; but that is not at all the important point about it. " You should listen to it out of sympathy for the lovers, or out of respect for the noble characters therein. I beg of you to follow attentively this work of Kalidasa." [6] The prastavanla or the prologue is modelled on earlier types as in the plays of Bhasa. As soon as the Sutradhara introduces the play there is a cry for help behind the curtain and the Sutradhara then speaks in the same words as his predecessor in Bhasa did. " What is this I hear ? A cry for help. Did I not hear it immediately I requested my audience to— Oh, I know." The poet's construction of the plot is less skilful and his similes are more commonplace than elsewhere. The author here is more an enthusiastic young poet than a craftsman of art and ideas. The characters in the Vik. (e.g. the Vidusaka) are standardised as in earlier plays. Kalidasa was not only a new arrival him-

6. pranayisu va. diksia?yiat athava sadvastu-purusa-bahumanat, Srnuta manobhir avahitaifi kriyam imam kalidiasasya (Vik. 1-12).

7. aye kim nu khalu mad vijnapananantaram kurarli?a-miva akase sabdab sruyate___bhavatu, jnatam (Vik. Prologue).

self, but the first one of his time, in the field of drama. He says in the prologue that upto that time only plays of earlier dramatists were produced ; that his was the first of a moderner, so to say. Why should he say that ? What harm is there, one would like to ask him, if earlier plays alone were staged ? No harm, Kalidasa would reply, but not so much good either ; they are all old and dull, so dull and so stereotyped, but my play is something different, something *quite unusual* (apurva). The Sutradhara in the Vik. says as much and all this in the prologue.[8]

There was another reason as to why Kalidasa boasted of his play as unusual (apurva), in spite of its plot, development and characters being of the early standardised type. In his enthusiasm for music and dance Kalidasa had boldly introduced a new feature which, as he thought, was also more dramatic on the stage. That new feature was the whole of Act IV where for the most part only one character—that of the hero-king Vikrama moved on the stage. The king was virtually mad. He had lost his beloved Urvasi; he would not rest till he found her out This mood of the hero was most favourable to a variety of music and dance. Secondly, to remove the possibility of the scene growing monotonous to the audience Kalidasa introduced two ethereal nymphs who kept on singing and humming, in Prakrt melodies, an allegory about an elephant-king madly in search of his beloved.[9] The hero-king was so mad that he would stop anything that crossed his path to inquire of his Urvasi. Thus, he asks a cloud, an elephant, a bee and so on. Could we *imagine* that these various objects were somehow represented on the stage ? In that case the king would disappear from the stage for some time (the nymphs, during the while, sang their allegory). Could we *further imagine* a representation like the following ? The hero asked am elephant, got, of course, no reply, and so walked out of the stage ; in the meanwhile, a bee was shown on the stage, the king re-entered to find the bee whom he asked as before, got no reply and so walked away as before and so on. With such an im-

8. marina, bahusas tu purve§iam kaviriam drstah prayoga-bandhah | so'ham adya vikramorvasiyam nama a-purvam natakam prayoksye.

9. Re. the arguments that the Prakrt melodies in Act IV are spurious, seel R. B. S. P. Pandit's edition. In maintaining that those passages are genuine we have not followed the arguments advanced against R. B. Pandit by Prof. R. D. Karmarkar (in his edition of the Vik. and others).

pressive stage-movement it is no wonder that Kalidasa should be proud of his original (apurva) device; but, to his surprise and indignation, he saw, watching during his first production more the audience than the play as any young dramatist would, that his-device had not pleased the audience or at least that it did not strike them and like all other young dramatists he walked home shaking his head half in pity and half in anger,[10] for the audience which was too stupid to see his originality.

Great writer as he was (to be), Kialidasa was neither dismayed nor discouraged. Day by day he was finding more and more of the dramatist in himself and from now on he was not going to be dictated to either by tradition or by public taste. He would rather care, if at all, for the judgment of the discerning few since they could, if ever, form an independent opinion about any thing and on its merits while the (so-called) public taste had no deep roots in convictions but grew up like a mushroom, anywhere and any time.

All this Kalidasa said in as many words in the prologue to his second) play, the Malav., where the Sutradhara says rather contemptuously.

aye viveka-visriantam abhihitam pasya,
puranam ityeva na sadhu sarvam
na capi kavyam navam ityavadyam
santah paraksyanyatarad bhajante
muqlhah para-pratyayaneya-buddhili

" Your talk has no reason in it; anything is not good simply because it is old, and any work is not bad simply because it is new. The experts compare, decide and choose while the ignorant follow the opinions of others." [n]

To say that only old plays are good or that no new play could be good is just to talk nonsense. Secondly, a play is not mere recitation or narration as most of the old play are. A play is essentially a representation or as Pandita-Kausika says in Malav. I, prayoga-pradhanam hi natya-sastram, a drama is essentially a performance. With this theory; of his Kalidasa was prepared even to risk the disapproval of the learned. " Only fools cater to the good

10. It would have been all pity if he were to know that any explanation that his device (with the prakrt melodies) is genuine is rejected by some modern scholars by saying that it is a strain on the imagination.
11. Malav. 1-2.

opinion of the learned," says the wise Vidusaka.[12] But luckily the discerning few were so pleased with the stage device (prayoga) in the Vik. that they requested the stage-manager (Sutradhara) to produce Kalidiasa's Malavikagnimitram.[13]

Thus does Kalidasa boldly stand, in his second play, all for art .as he sees it. He pities those good writers who compromise with public taste at the expense of their art. Theirs is not art but commerce ; to earn a livelihood they sell their knowledge.[14]

So he sets out to treat his story in a new fashion. In itself, the story of the Malav. is the usual one of a King's love to a pretty girl, mixed with the follies and intrigues of the Vidusaka and with jealousies within the harem. But the whole atmosphere, the entire development are 'of an original type. Music, dance, painting and fine arts (Silpa) on the one hand and the ingenuity of the Vidu?aka on the other, place this love-story on a different plane. Kalidiasa insists that the love of' his hero-king is not of a coarse type. When the king saw Malavika's (the heroine's) portrait he was just attracted, but when he saw her sing and dance he was simply conquered. Thus in 11-14 says the hero :

sarvantahpura-vanita-vyaparam prati nivrtta-hrdayasya
sa vama-locana me snehasyaikayanabhuta.

" My heart is turned from the ladies of the harem ; this pretty-eyed one is my all and only attraction."'

Secondly, the whole credit for the development of the plot belongs to the Vidusaka. By starting a quarrel between her two teachers, he made it possible for the heroine to be personally brought before the hero; and then the play unfolds itself (Acts I and II). On the occasion of the *dohada* function of the Asoka tree the Vidusaka caused (deliberately) the queen to stumble from the swing sol that, "disabled as she (the queen) was, the function had to be delegated to Malavika (III). When Malavika was imprisoned by the jealous queen, the Vidusaka feigned snake-bite, acquired the queen's signet, and thus seeking an entry brought the hero to the imprisoned heroine (IV). In all this the Vidusaka is not the supposed court-fool; his

12. Bhagavati, pandita-paritoga-pratyaya nanu muidha jatih (Malav. II).

13. Cf. abhihito smi vidvat-parisada etc. {*Ibid.* Prologue)

14. Yasyagamah Kevalajivikaiva tanp jnana-panyam vanijam vadanti {*Ibid.* 1-17)

plans, too, are brilliant in his own way. One might boldly assert that the play was written entirely for the sake of the Vidusaka's character.

Such an assumption is not fanciful or far-fetched. Kalidasa, it appears, has a defined purpose in making the whole play revolve round the Vidusaka. In the Malav. the Vidusaka is not the standardised fool; on the other hand, as already mentioned,[16] Gautama, as he is called here, has a fund of common-sense. Only a close student of human nature could successfully incite two sufficiently cultured men like the,teachers to quarrel among themselves. Gautama does it He has an independent eye for beauty as when, on the entrance of Malavika, he says to the King :

preksatiam bhavan, na khalu asyah praticchandat
parihiyate madhurata

" The charm of the original is no less than that of the portrait " (ID.

His field of observation is wide and his application apt as could be seen in remarks like—

(i) daridra atura iva vaidyena upaniyamanam ausadham iccasi.

" You are like a poor patient who looks to a doctor's medicine (which he cannot afford)." (II)

(ii) sa tapasvini naga-raksita iva nidhir na sukham samasia-dayitavya.

" That poor dear is not easy to win like treasure guarded over by a cobra." (Ill)

(iii) aho kumbhilakaih kamukaisca pariharajniyia candrika.

"Oh ! Thieves and lovers should avoid moonlight." (IV)'

His ready-wittedness too is apparent as when in Act IV he relieves the tension of an awkward situation with an apt remark :

sadhu re pingala vanara. susthu pantratas
tvaya sarikatat sapaksah.

" Bravo Pingala, my monkey; thanks for saving your caste-fellow from a difficulty."

It is such a character with common-sense that gives a realistic touch to the entire atmosphere of the play. In the company of this Vidusaka the hero could never sink into that melodramatic and

15. See above Chap. X.

monotonous type as usual. Like an innocent, smiling child he brings a smile to every sour or serious-looking face around him. His realism is both infectious and provoking. The scene of the quarrelling teachers and that of the jealous queen, Imvata—are natural responses to the Vidusaka's realistic mentality. The Vidusaka, in essence, is the worldly type of man. Wherever he moves, the ways of the world (loka-carita) move too. With the creation of one such character the genius of Kalidasa has enlarged the scope of drama. A drama is no longer a romantic biography of fairy prince but a realistic representation of the ways of the world. The Vidusaka—a kind of Mr. Everyman—has found a high place in literature. It is Mr. Everyman and not an Avatar that belongs to the world. So, to understand the world one must first study? the average man, the rightful and the long-established inhabitant of this globe.

The study of the average man is always the beginning but not always the end of the study of the world and its ways. The world is something more than what the average man makes or thinks it to be. It has a definite past, so it must be having a future. The average man is guided by the past, so he will be goaded by the future. Though he knows it not, man is a product of the unfathomed past and may be, likewise, a result in the fathomless future. Thus man is a conscious citizen of this globe, but an unconscious citizen of the world that was and of the world to be, Whether he likes it or not, the student of the world has to face this conclusion. Kalidasa was not brought up in vain in the Hindu traditions. His reasoning led him direct to such a conclusion. He was himself floating out of the yawning past and visualised himself helpless in the future. Was it his intellectual struggle, supremacy and solitariness that drove him to raise his hands to the Almighty to be saved from the world-to-be ? His last words in his last play—the Abhijnana Sakuntalam betray the helplessness of an honest intellect before its own brilliance. " Let the King turn to his subjects' welfare; let the learned learn to grow wiser" (i.e. let the innocent fools grow at least more innocent and more foolish) but, runs the supplication—

mamapi ca ksapayatu nilalohitah
punarbhavam parigata-saktir atmabhuh

"Let the Inner God, Nilalocita, whose powers enmesh me, let him—let him save me from the world to be." [16]

16. A. Sak. VII. *Bharatavakya.*

Thus the last play is an evidence of the higher studies and the higher powers of Kalidasa. In its background and its general atmosphere, in its plan and its development it is entirely different from the Malav. The Malav. deals with a historical (known), while the A. sak. deals with a mythical or rather a traditional (unknown) hero. In the former, the palace walls contain within themselves the different ways of the world ; in the latter, Earth and Heaven form the playground of human fate and possibilities. The atmosphere in the A. iSak. is mostly that of a hermitage, that of the Earth (Acts I to IV) and that in the Heaven (Act VII). Let us not forget to remember that a hermitage in those days signified the close of a man's life. In both the Malav. and the A. sak. the theme is *loka-carita;* but the *loka* (world)) in the Malav. is so different from that in the A. Sak. The first deals with *a man,* the second with *man.* Dusyanta and iSakuntala,—the hero and the heroine, Man and Woman—are taken through all the worlds, from the world originated by love to the world where love is consummated. The worldly-wise Vidusaka of the Malav. would in the A. sak. be a child groping for his way in this tremendous journey from the unknown to the unknown. And wisely has Kalidasa, the artist, left the Vidusaka, an earlier artistic creation of his, in the background. Not only does the Vidusaka in the A. iSak. not play an important part, but has been deliberately removed from the centre of the action. The Vidusaka never saw sakuntala (I), was not present at the love-marriage (III), is removed from the scene of repudiation (V), and left behind at the time of the re-union (VII).

• * *

The story of Dusyanta and Sakuntalla, as told from the epic days, was *a love-story,* of a gallant prince and an innocent beauty; but with Kalidasa it is a story of *love.* Long before Kalidasa had found out that love as depicted and understood in the love stories, was not *love* the eternal, instinctive, all powerful, constructive and creative force that it is. It is better, said Kalidasa, that love be not consummated than that it should be cultivated; it is not that the hero and the heroine meet and then fall in love, but that, if each is capable of love, they *must meet,*—it is immaterial if they meet here or elsewhere. Thus says the hero-king in the Malav. (HI. 15).

anaturotkanthitayoh prasidhyata
samagamenapi ratir na mam prati

paraspara-prapti-nirasayor varam
Sanra-nasopi samanuragayoh?.

" I would not be pleased at the union, though successful, of the two where one is longing and the other not; where each loves the other with the same intensity it matters not even if they die in despair."

So we find that in his last play Kalidasa has depicted Dusyanta afrd iSakuntala in a different way. As the play opens Dusyanta enters chasing a stag and throughout the play Dusyanta is more a king with manly habits but never the usual hero-king sickening yet surfeited with love. The opening speech of the Vidusaka in Act II emphasises Dusyanta's love for hunting; if we are to reject the Vidusaka's account as exaggerated the Army Commander comes in to correct us. Hunting, he says, is a virtue with King Du'?yanta, who, so to say, is built of sterner stuff (II-3). That Dusyanta is a dutiful and conscientious king is obvious.[17] No hero-king of a love-story has anywhere else been depicted in this light. Such a Dusyanta one least expects to be involved in a love-affair. Likewise, iSakuntala is not, like other heroines, brought up in the traditions of luxury and amorousness. And lastly, the hermitage is the last place for cupid's trade to flourish. And yet such a hero and such a heroine fall in love with each other amidst such surroundings ! Here is Love; Love that is free and healthy, Love that is not only nursed, nourished and consummated in a hermitage (the laps of Mother Nature so to say) but that is never allowed into! the interior of towns with slums, on courts of corruption, or of palaces of petty-mindedness, i.e. never allowed into the interior of hum-drum life.[18] This world of ours is destined not to love, so it does not live. Life is love, says kalidasa, and love is eternal. Life too should then be eternal, shouldn't it? But just like love, life on the terrestrial

17. Cf. V 4, 5. Also—
vetravati, madvacanad amatyam aryapisunam bruhi.
ciraprabodhanin na sambhavitam asmabhir adya dharmasanam adhyiasitum. yat pratyaveksitaip paurakaryam aryeuja tat patram aropya diyatam iti.

"Vetravati, let the minister know that we have not sat in Council today as we left our bed quite late. So whatever affairs have been gone through by the Minister should be despatched to us in writing" (Act VI).

18. So in Act V Sakuntala only passes through the town as if only to bring to our notice the conditions of the palace and city.

globe is not consummated. Even a powerful (and super-human > king like the mythical Vikrama suffers as long as he is on this mortal globe Sukha-pratyarthitia daivasya: Oh! how fate banters human happiness ! is his cry (Vik. V)]. This, however, is not a counsel of despair. Kalidasa tells us that Vikrama is going to the Heavens to help Indra and there he will have his beloved Urvasi all the rest of his days. Similarly, earthly love is held in intellectual mockery in the Malav. against the background of the Vidusaka's petty intrigues. What wonder then if Kalidasa should raise his hands in supplication and cry out,

Let the Inner God, Nilalohita, whose powers enmesh me, let him—let him save me from the world to be."

* * *

From the foregoing it will be seen that Kalidasa stands apart from his predecessors as an artist. Art and life differ in that the former is the achievement of intellect and intuition while the latter runs mostly along instincts. "Any operation" says George Santayana, " which thus humanises and rationalises objects is called art."[19] Drama with Kalidlasa fulfils that function consciously for the first time in Sanskrit literature. Drama is not the mere representation of life, but the presentation of an outlook on life, the presentation of life in the light of that outlook. The more we study Kalidasa the more we find that drama as an art is entirely changing into his hands. It is not mere story-telling as in the earlier plays; it is not mere poetic outburst as, we shall see, in most of the later plays. It does not preach morality at a time when moralists were invading the fortresses of literature. Drama here; is suggestive first and suggestive last. What does it suggest ? (1) The beauty of Man. (2) The beauty of Him whose handiwork man is. As for the first, Kalidasa had long before anticipated Hamlet's sentiments about man. He could also say " What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties ! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a God ! The beauty of the world ! The paragon of animals."[20] Like Hamlet too Kalidasa saw man as " this quintessence of dust." But unlike to Hamlet, man delights Kalidasa. The reason:

19. The Life of Reason (Reason in Art), p. 4.
20. Hamlet Act, II, Sc. ii.

for this is man's parentage and heritage. To both i.e. parentage and heritage, man is an unconscious servant. Work against God, work against Nature man could not How far man is a creature of his surroundings Kalidasa *his* exquisitely shown in Acts I and VII of the A. Sak. In the last Act Dusyanta enters the hermitage of sage Marica in the heavenly world. Immediately his right arm throbs i(VII-13). What is the use? he asks. But the surroundings remind him of an earlier and similar occasion when the same arm had throbbed (1-14). And the consequences ? Better not think about them. No sooner he decides to remain indifferent than words are heard from behind the stage. " ma khalu capalam kuru,—do not be rash." As soon as Dusyanta heard them, he might have started in terror. Were not similar words'addressed to him (in Act I) by the hermits? He is immediately thrown back to the old days. Oh ! how pleased were then the hermits with him ! How they blessed him " to be the father of a world-conqueror " (1-12)! Alas ! where is all that now ? Dusyanta who, in Act I, could come to quick decisions in utmost confidence (cf. 1-19) could not now be confident about things quite reasonable. Just as he is living his past, wishing that the hermits' blessings were come true, imagining what a bright boy he would have had for a son—lo, what is this? He is seeing a boy (Sarvadamana) before him ! All the parental feelings fanned by memory Dusyanta now showers on the boy that comes on the stage. Like one in dream he actually wishes the boy were his own. Is he a world-conqueror? Look, here is the boy's palm bearing all the marks of a world conqueror ! Poor Dusyanta ! The more he was reminded of earlier scenes the more he felt like one who had burnt his fingers when the female ascetic (who accompanies the boy on the stage) kindles his hopes by observing a close resemblance between the boy and himself.[21] Dusyanta dare not come to a decision. If we remember the younger Duisyanta in Act I, who within a few moments after seeing Sakuntala decides that she must be a girl worthy of a Ksatriya, since a cultured heart like his is drawn towards her,[22] we see how thoroughly Dui§yanta has now been shaken. Apart from that, he could not escape the influence of earlier memories revived under

21. asya balasya te'pi samviadini akrtir iti vismapitasmi.
I am surprised that the figure **and** features of this boy **and yourself should resemble so.**

22. 1-19.

similar circumstances.[23] All this is not so much explained as suggested. The materials are the ways of the human world. They are embodied in the dramatist's observation. Some sort of an atmosphere is created, set against which one or two incidents of every day life are made to appear as illustrations of human conduct and character. In the history of past Sanskrit drama, the craft of the Master has inspired only one or two dramatists while, with the others, history repeated itself by standardising an earlier originality.

23. This might be an explanation of the word abhijnana or pratyabhijana in the title of the play. The word means "recognition."

CHAPTER XIV

THE MRCCHAKATIKA OF SUDRAKA

We left Sanskrit Drama in the last chapter as a plant blossoming in congenial soil of contemporary social life. As a piece of literary art it fulfilled two functions; (1) it *represented,* as far as necessary, contemporary life which served as a background, and (2) it *presented* the dramatist's definite outlook on life. Kalidasa who was the first to introduce these features was, like any other innovating genius,, a revolutionary. The peculiarity of a revolution is that the followers are? more fanatical than the originators. As in politics, so in literature. Thus in the post-Kalidasa period, one would expect plays that exploit the art of the Master. To such set of plays belongs the Mrcchakatika ('The Toy-Cart') attributed to king iSudraka.

In the first place it should be borne in mind that apart from the question whether Sudraka wrote it or not the Mrcchakaitika definitely belongs to the post-Kalidasa period. It is not our present object to discuss the date of authors; nor is such a discussion of any practical value to us. Sudraka is a mythical character. The information about him given in the prologue to the play is too ridiculous to be utilised in a reasonable discussion. It is not the author's but the play's date that matters to us. (It is more likely for two or more persons to have one and the same name than for two or more plays to go by one and the same title.)

The story of the play would be referred to below. In the story is a sub-plot related to the incidents of a political revolution. Political revolutions, however, seem to have been such simple affairs in those days as to occur any and every day. It was as easy perhaps to occupy a throne in those days as it is for any bully in these days to occupy a seat in a third-class railway compartment. The upheaval would not affect the by-standers—unless as a piece of curiosity to those inclined idly enough.

A comparatively more important fact is that the play utilises more characters, both male and female, belonging to) the lower society. Consequently the dialects used (i.e. the prakts used) are various (such as sauraseni, avanti, pracya, magadhi and the apabh-

ramsas, sakari, candali and dhakka.) The greater part of the play is in the dialects. Of the twenty-four or twenty-five male characters only five speak in Sanskrit Of these five Oarudatta is the hero of the play ; Aryaka is the hero of the revolution ; Sarvilaka, a Brahmin of high culture skilled in breaking men's houses and women's hearts; a gambler named Darduraka; and the Court-Examiner (adhikiaraiijaka). This fact may or may not be useful in determining the date of the play. Nevertheless it suggests one thing viz., that the play was probably written at a time when not only the Priakt dialects but even the apabhramSas were freely used and the employment of the dialects as such was more frequent.

Similarly the very development and the subject-matter of the play might throw some light on the time the play was written in. Throughout the play the hard hand of the Fate is felt. Even when everything was destined to end happily the hero is moved to compare the human beings tossed by fate to buckets of water tossed by a water-wheel now up and now down. (esa kridati kupa-yantra-ghatika-nyaya-prasakto vidhili.)[1] Buddhism is mentioned in the play in all its details and there is an actual conversion of a menial to Buddhism. (By the way, one might wonder whether, in case the author were a Buddhist, a character of a higher status would have been converted to Buddhism.) On the whole those were days of unsettled conditions and an indifferent government. Each of the observations in itself may not be of any help; but the rough life represented in the play read along with the revolution and the Buddhistic conversion (of a menial) would suggest a time immediately following the disruption of a central authority and a time when Buddhism was tolerated because it did not affect the established Hindu life. The Sariiviahaka whose life, for a long time, is anything but reputable turns at last into a Buddhist monk and, in a fit of generosity that affects a dramatist of the 'happy-end' school, the Samvahaka is made the imperial head, so to say, of all the Buddhist *vikaras*. Such a time we could not imagine immediately after the disruption of the Mauryan Empire since Buddhism then was a court fashion; besides, the Apabhramsa dialects were yet to

1. X. 59. Also cf. Act VT where the hero's son wants the gold cart used by a neighbourly boy and the heroine sighs on this : bhagavan krtanta. puskara-patra-patita-jala-bindu-sadrsaib kridasi tvam purusa-bh&gadheyail?.

. evolve. The next Empire built which tumbled down in its turn was the Gupta Empire. After its downfall in the middle of the fifth century A.D., Buddhism might have once again raised its head (as the frequent visits of the Chinese pilgrims indicate) till King Harsa sealed its fate forever by thinking it with politics in the middle of the 7th century A.D. IS it possible that the play was written somewhere between the fall of the Gupta Empire and the rise of King Harsa? Could we, for example, read such a meaning in the fourth verse of Act VIII where the Vita describes the park as follows—

asarana-sarana-pramada-bhutaih
vana-tarubhili kriyamaoa-caru-karma,
hrdayam iva duratmanam *a-guptam*
navam iva rajyam anirjitopabhogyam.

"Here the trees are doing a good deal by joyfully offering shelter to the homeless; the park (however) is like the untutored (i.e. uncultured) heart of the wicked ; it is like a new kingdom the titleship (upabhogya) to which is not yet proved.'" In the above, we can understand a pun on the word " a-gupta " and the meaning as, " It is like the heart of the wicked ; it is like a kingdom where the Guptas are no more and the new kings have not established their authority." Further we may note that Aryaka who is successful in the revolution is called a gopala-daraka.[2] Leaving the above questions unanswered for the time being let us come to another striking feature viz., the influence of Kalidiasa throughout the play. Certain phrases and ideas are more obviously perceptible.

(1) In Act I when the heroine is taking off her ornaments to hand them over to !sakara the Vita says, na puspamasam arhati udyana-lata " let not the garden-creeper be deprived of its flowers/' One is immediately reminded of Kalidasa who in A. Sak. 1-15 compares a woodland lass to *vana-lata* (a forest creeper and a town-beauty to *udyana-lata,* a garden creeper.

(2) In Act *I* again the same Vita, on learning that the heroine is in love with Carudatta, says : susthu khalu idam ucyate, ratnam ratnena samgacchatu. The context as well as the contents of the above remark remind one of Kalidasa's words in a similar situation in Raghu. VI-79 viz.,

2. *Cf* also Act VII, tatahpravisiti guptaryaka-pravaha^asthah.

tvam atmanas tulyam amum vrnisva
ratnam samagacchatu kaincanena.

" This person suits! you well; choose him, let jewel be studded with gold." The Vita in Mrcch., however, quotes (ucyate, it *is* said) " let jewel be studded with jewel."

(3) In Act IX carudatta protests that he did not murder Vasantasena. As a matter of fact, he *could* not. How could he? He would not injure even a plant by plucking its flowers. (IX-28 yo 'ham latam kusumitlam api puspahetor lakrsya naiva kusumiavaciayam karomi.) The fine sentiment expressed here takes one to an equally delicate situation in A. sak. where sakuntala is described by her father in similar words (IV-8. nadatte priya-mainidanapi bhavatam snehena ya pallavam; she loves to adorn herself with flowers but she loves you—trees—more than that and so she doesn't pluck a single sprout).

Instances could be multiplied.[3] More important still is the influence on the technique and the handling of the Mycch. The hero and the heroine and the atmosphere of the Mrcch. are worldly in the first place ; and the idea developed is the same as that of Kalidasa. The hero and the heroine of the latter are mythical (in A. iSak.) while those of Sudraka are matter of fact. ' Love is Life' is the text of Kalidiasa ; ' Love *in* Life' is the text of 'Sudraka. Kalidasa chose the unconventional (from the point of view of the subject) atmosphere of a hermitage ; iSudraka chose the unconventional quarters of of a courtesan. Love, in Kalidiasa, is consummated in another world ; Love, in Sudraka, is consummated in another atmosphere (viz., after the revolution). In both, love is studied in so far as it affects character. Action there is in Sudraka's play but it does not happen on the stage. The play is a character-study. It is like a mirror-house where each one of the ten acts is a mirror wherein a person is seen from a particular view-point. The play is suggestive of the relations of man to and of his place in the society. In doing this it follows in the foot-steps of Kalidasa.

In order to see exactly the significance of the statement that Sudraka's handling etc. is influenced by Kalidiasa we have to analyse minutely the structure of his sudraka's) play. The story was probably better known before the play. carudatta, a poor Brahmin, falls in love with Vasantasena, a courtesan of culture. Sakara, the brother-

3. Cf. Mrcch. 1X29 and Vik. IV-13. The last line of the former is addressed to Sakara.

in-law of the ruling king, has met with rebuffs at the hands of the courtesan ; so all his fury is now against Carudatta. A mistake in taking a carriage leads Vasantasena into Sakara's private gardens. The latter, unable to win, strikes her and thinking her to be dead runs away. Next we find him busy accusing Carudatta, in a court of law, of Vasantasenia's murder. Nothing can save the hero who is now led to the gallows. In the meanwhile Aryaka who, during his escape from the, prison, was protected by Carudatta is now successful in the revolution and, as his first act after coronation, saves Carudatta from the gallows. Vasantasena too had only fainted when iSakara left her and now she runs into the untied arms of Carudatta.

The story above is the reader's construction and not what the dramatist tells directly. The situations introduced by the dramatist are suggestive in themselves. In creating the atmosphere, devices like the evening time in Act I or midnight in Act III or the clouds and the thunder and the lightning in Act V etc. are improvements on Kalidasa. They also show; a greater mastery over the technique. So the story is not told but suggested, or, we might say that the story is presented in a way that suggests what the dramatist feels and thinks about it. To depict the love between the hero and the heroine is not the purpose of Sudraka. That they love each other\ he tells us at the very beginning of Act I. There is something else that the dramatist wants to depict and for this he builds in Act I the outlines within which the possibilities of the development are to be described. The interest centres on Vasantasena, the heroine. Keen and appreciative in observation, graceful in movements, sprightly in behaviour, confident and courageous she personifies in herself the Joy in Life (the same as 'Sakuntalia in A. Sak. I). In theory accessible to all (as a courtesan), in fact inclined to the few deserving, from the moment she is seen fleeing from the vulgar in life (Sakara) to seek safety in sympathy amidst culture and sincerity (at Carudatta) we admire her courage, we appreciate her position and we identify ourselves with her fears and frolics. On one side is the poor but cultured and youthful Brahmin disgusted (with his poverty) and despairing (as any other youth would); on the other is the rich but uncultured (Sakara. While the Brahmin has tasted the miseries of life to grow wiser and more sympathetic, Sakara has tasted the pleasures of a high position only to grow self-centred and spiteful. Both are outwardly encouraged and helped in their respective behaviour by their friends and servants. The Brahmin earns love from

his friend Maitreyaka while Sakara buys service from his Vita. Between such extremes is Vasantasena placed and it is no wonder if she comes to be the point of clash.

Act I suggests the possibilities of such a clash. Carudatta is introduced in his characteristics as a well-bred and well-behaving householder. The time is night when the evil forces are supposed to be let loose,- Like the darkness of the night comes sakara, so swift and so dangerous. It is a welcome accident which gives a chance to Vasantasena to observe the contrast between Sakara roaming like a hell-hound and Qarudatta quite a picture of decency. The hero also has a chance of seeing Vasantasena, not the courtesan as she would be at home with coquettish smiles and cunning eyes. He sees those very eyes now seeking safety, that very figure now hunted in ugly cruelty. The gallant youth and the admiring courtesan forgot for a moment their respective positions, that one was a man with no means and the other a woman of no status. In their very helplessness these two social outlaws ran into each other's arms. Time was not yet. The Joy of Life knocked at the gates of Nobility but the latter had not the power to retain it. So Vasantasena is sent home.

If Act I shows the hero at home and the heroine outside, Act II 6hows the hero in the outer world and the heroine at home. Poor Vasantasena ! in hen filthy surroundings where vagabonds and drunkards and gamblers swear and brawl and drink ! Filthier still is the atmosphere that her mother breathes into Vasantasena's room. It is a hard fight for the heroine. A woman of no status ! Is it possible that a woman who is fighting against such surroundings has no status ? Her heart goes, as if to escape, out of the window where on the road Carudatta has given away his only garment in appreciation of gallant work. A poor Brahmin and a man of no means ! Suddenly her fight is over. No longer is she a woman of no status, nor is Carudatta a man of no means. What is true is character. The hero, in spite of poverty, retains his character and, the heroine, in spite of surroundings, establishes her character. They are now indispensable to each other since the heart of each throbs for the life of the other.

Act III shows the hero once again at home but now he has entirely changed. Love or the Joy of Life, has vitalised his feelings. No longer does he sit at home cursing poverty, but enjoys his capacity to enjoy. It is *Love* and not *love for Vasantasena* which makes him rise, in his love of music, above the humdrum and into the

harmony of Life, From that height we laugh at the worldly worries of the Vidusaka (Maitreyaka), we generally forgive the wicked ways of the world and of the thief, and not until we meet the noble wife of Carudatta do we descend to the earth. In the meanwhile, the neglected world has played a trick by removing the symbol of the Joy of Life in the form of the gold ornaments deposited by Vasantasenia in Act I.

Act IV, shows us that this symbol *had* to disappear now. Its work was done. It came and conquered and then it took the tale of that conquest to its mistress. Paths of love seem to run in a circle. The thief loved the heroine's maid and so the stolen goods found their way back to the heroine. The fact that the hero attempted to replace the symbol, only shows how perfect its conquest was. The man with no means is now the richest, richest in character; the woman with no status is now the noblest—in her appreciation of nobility ; and (Act V) in the midst of the mad world protesting, flashing, threatening and thundering the two are united.

To an average mind the story ends here. But the Mrcchakatika, as said above, is not a love-story but a story of Love. This Love is all-creative. It creates itself before it creates all. Whatever it touches it vitalises and is ever vitalising. It builds a home, it sets up a society and so in Act VI we meet Vasantasenia mothering her lover's little boy. That boy has a clay-cart which he does not like ; she helps him, with her ornaments, to get a golden cart. In a moment she herself is in the wrong cart—the cart she would never have liked. iSakara's cart is detained owing to congestion on the road outside Carudatta's house. Vasantasenia gets into it mistaking it for her lover's cart and speeds headlong into the jaws of death. So does Oarudatta whose cart has been occupied by the run-away rebel with a price on his head whom our hero forgives and helps to escape. Thus the hero and the heroine are in the grips of cruel fate. But that fate is here nothing but the little accidents caused by the irreponsible Joy of Life itself. Acts VI and VII tell us that the Joy of Life *has to wade* through the underworld of misery if it should illuminate the latter. So when Vasantasena, in Act VIII, falls down struck by the mad jealousy of Sakara she does so not before she evokes the best traits in Vita and the Ceta. " The stores-house of Joy and Grace is looted " says the Vita when he sees the lifeless body of VasantasenS. " Master," the poor cartman chokes out, " Master, you have committed a grave sin!" When iSakara confronts both of

them face him in a rebellious attitude. As for the heroine we need not be anxious. Her own good deeds come to save her in the form of the Samvahaka whom she had earlier saved from the gamblers and who is *now* a Buddhist mendicant. In Act IX Carudatta is hauled up before the authorities charged with Vasantasenia's murder. But the whole scene serves more the purpose of showing how the mere presence of the hero is enough to evoke the best not only in the Court-examiner and the Assessors but even in that vile mother of Vasantasena. As to his own safety once again, good deeds of the past revive to redeem. He is, for the present, condemned to death not because the Court-examiner was convinced nor that the Assessors or the mother believed in his guilt, but, ironically enough, on the evidence of those very ornaments with which Vasantasena had filled his son's cart and which the ViduSaka, during a scuffle, scatters in the court. Whatever it is, the clay-cart now fulfils its functions as a symbol of the miserable world uplifted by the touch of the joy of life. The rebel whose, life was saved by carudatta has now succeeded and his first deed as a king is to set carudatta free. The joy in life has now rejuvenated the world and Vasantasena is re-united with carudatta. Without Carudatta's help Aryaka would not have been a king and but for Vasantasenla Carudatta would have had no chance of saving Aryaka.

We have discussed the play at such length for two reasons ; (1) the Mrcchakatika is the only (at least, available) play of the dramatist, and (2) the play shows the new departure introduced by kalidasa, in broader lines. It was said in connexion with the Malav. that Kalidiasa, with the creation of the worldly Vidusaka, brought drama nearer to life. This feature was emphasised in A. sak. by the creation of the living characters and scenes with life. sakuntala as a sprightly girl laughing and enjoying in the company of her friends (I); as a love-sick maiden (III); as a wife recognising her responsibilities (IV); as a mother fighting for her position (V); and as a woman prepared at all costs to share with man the pains and pleasures of life—this' sakuntala lives in everyday life and thought So does Dusyanta, a healthy young man with healthy tastes (I and II), a lover of beauty and innocence (III), a man knowing and shouldering his responsibilities (V and VI) and kind-hearted' father (VII). Likewise the family life, with all intimacies and intri-

cacies, is realistically depicted in Act IV. The Mrchakatika, too, introduces life on the stage. The scene of the gamblers in the disreputable locality (II), that of the cartmen driving their carts on crowded roads (VI, VII, 1II), the one where the thief effects a break into the wall (IV) or where Sakara and his friends chase Vasantasena in a dark corner of the road (I) or where the two police-officers quarrel (VI)—all these are the scenes from the matter of fact world. With these two dramatists Sanskrit drama pulsates with the currents in social life. The art of Kalidasa is fresh, that of iSudraka is powerful. Both, however, are artists to the very tips of their fingers.

CHAPTER XV

THE DOCTRINAIRE DRAMA

(Natyasastra of Bharata)[1]

A. THE TEXT

From the early days to the Mrcchakatika of Sudraka we have traversed a long way and as we look back we find in astonishment how such a simple, commonplace, semi-religious function like *Recitation* evolved ultimately into an artistic method of representation. The changes in the process must, naturally enough, have been so slow and so gradual as to be imperceptible for a long time. But a time does come in all such processes of evolution when an inquisitive mind takes the first chance of detecting and recording those changes. It need not be added that success alone stimulates and forms the subject-matter of such a study. With Bhasa, Kalidasa and Sudraka drama grew in success and popularity. Naturally, men turned to understand, analytically if possible, this new art which was recognised as art quite newly. Thus we find about the fifth or sixth century A.D. an attempt, for the first time, to systematise and codify the results of this study. It is not that drama was not studied earlier but those earlier studies could not be expected to! be systematic for two reasons : (1) drama as such took time to develop into a distinctively recognised literary art, and (2) no standard plays of an artistic type could be expected till later still to justify such a study. Kalidasa and Sudraka mainly contributed in removing both these difficulties and soon after we have the first treatise on dramaturgy, the *Natyasastra* known as that of Bharata.

At the very outset a grave objection might be raised. How could it be shown that Bharata's book belongs to the 5th or 6th century A.D. ? It has not been and it could not be shown. Besides, the *Natyaiastra* attributed to Bharata and traditionally handed down in 36 chapters (containing about 5556 verses) may not be the work of Bharata. In that case, the date of Bharata does not affect the date

1. The references can be found in the 1929 edition of Natyasastra *in* the Kashi Sanskrit Series, No. 60.

of the *Natyasastra.* Secondly, some original treatise on the art of recitation or on *rasa* as composed by a Bharata might have been amplified with reference to later developments. Or, lastly, original short studies on various, topics concerned with recitation, representation, voice-cultivation, physical culture etc. might have been edited in an encyclopaedic form. Surmises like these are proposed not with the intention of going round a difficulty to avoid it but on the actual, textual evidence. The *Natyasastra* in its available form is bewildering by its construction and chaos. On first observation its construction seems so compact and so comprehensive ; at the same time there is so much that seems senseless and superfluous—as the following analysis would show.

Chapter I is in the usual vein, singing the glories of the book. It proves its divine origin and establishes the sanction of antiquity by declaring that *natya* is (i) the creation of God Brahma and (ii) the fifth Veda open to all castes. This fifth Veda was created from out of the four Vedas (Verse 17). "Here", said Brahma to the gods, "here have I produced an itihasa" (19). But the gods •were unable to perform it, so sage Bharata was approached. Bharata had an enviable advantage in his hundred sons (26-39). However, he found out that in the fifth Veda sons alone had not the monopoly, as in the other four Vedas, of taking their father to *svarga* and success and salvation. So he had to request Brahma to create Apsaras damsels to play female roles. With these initial preparations a *nandi* and an *anukrti* [probably a (panto-) mimic show] of the fight between gods and demons were represented (59) on the festive occasion of Indra's victory (56. *Mahendra-vijayotsave).* The demons naturally resented this public display of their defeat and raided the performance. A *natyagjha* (playhouse) had thus to be created as a protective measure, In the meanwhile Brahma pacifies the demons ' by singing a lyrical panegyric of *natya* (which is shown to have too noble an aim to vilify or libel the demons). The playhouse is constructed and on Brahma's order Bharata performs the *ranga-puja* (worshipping the stage)

Chapter II describes in great detail the various ways of building playhouses as well as the various models of playhouses. The

2. The word *rangay ranjr—might* mean ' red-colour' or ' paint', *ranga* —as a noun meaning the painted place' where originally we can imagine one painted curtain as the background.

whole description is introduced edgeways. At the end of the last chapter Bharata was asked to perform the *ranga-puja* and immediately after is described not the *ranga-puja* but the construction of the *natya-grha* (which has been constructed already in I 80-88). Even at that Bharata does not describe the house that has been actually built but engages in a lengthy and general description of three kinds of playhouses—the *vikrsta* (II 34-6), the *caturasra* (89 ff) and the *tryasra* (102). The *viksta* seems, as its root-meaning (viz. 'long drawn out') suggests, to have been an oblong hall with the audience facing the stage at one end. The *caturasra* was different since the audience here could be seated on four sides of the stage—either in a, circle or perpendicular to the stage—in the centre. The *tryasra* is a sort of modification of the last-mentioned—the audience being on three sides (right, left and front) of the stage. The stage itself was a! kind of platform raised on wooden pillars. The place below the platform was the *nepathya-grha*—the entrance to the platform being by a passage on the side away from the audience. The raised part (the platform) was known as the *ranga-sir$a*. Certain characters had to effect an entrance not on the platform but in—between the audience and the platform. This space was known as the *ranga-pitha*. Such an entrance was made by removing the piece of cloth hanging on the front side of the platform to screen the green-room below. Probably the *ranga-puja* was performed in the **green-room *beneath the platform.***

Chapter III continues the description of this *ranga-puja* mentioned in Chapter I—thus showing the contextual irrelevance of Chapter II. In IV the *ranga-puja* is over and a ' samavakara' (by name Amjta-manthana) is represented. This representation must have been a sort of pantomimic show since it is said (IV-4) that the audience was pleased with the ' karma-bhava-cwwdarscwa' as contrasted with the '*kanrn-bftsLva-anuklrtana'* (IV-11) of a ' (dima' later performed in the presence of God Siva. *Anukirtana* probably refers to ***recitation* and *armdarsana* to mere! (i.e. mute) *representation.* Bha-**Tata is then advised by Siva to introduce dancing in the *purvaranga* (overture) and deputed Tandu (18) to teach the *tdndava* dance (258a). The sages to whom Bharata is supposed to narrate his s*astra* ask him (258b-260a) why dancing which is connected neither with the music of the *purvaranga* nor with the sense of the play proper should be included in the show. Bharata replies, to the dismay of some modern critics (or better, fanatics), that dancing, though not

essential to or in a play, adds to the beauty of the show and the amusement of the audience. Verses 19 to 257 describe the various gestures *(karana)*, postures *(angahara)* and " movements " *(recaka)* of dancing. For the present we are inclined to suspect these verses since they so violently; separate the name of Tandu (18) from his derivative tandava (258a). Chapter V describes anew the *purva-ranga* modified in the light of Siva's instructions.

Chapters VI and VII deal with the *rasas* and the *bhavas*. This subject is not introduced as in any way arising naturally out of the previous discussion. After the purva-ranga one fails to see the necessity of explaining in great details the various *rasas* etc. What does it matter if the sages choose to ask (not one but) five irrelevant questions : (i) what is a *rasa?* (ii) What is a *bhava?* What is meant by (iii) a *samgraha,* (iv) a *karika* and (v) *nirukta?* (VI-1-3). Apart from the too inquisitive sages, the variety of both matter and style in the body of the text itself raises difficulties. In the first place, besides the usual slokas there are verses in larya metre •side by side with prose passages. This prose is written in the style usual to a commentator employing the first-person plural (for the author) while Bharata, from the very beginning, as consistently refers to himself in the first-person singular. Secondly, the *rasas* are mentioned now as four, now as eight and again as four original and four derived. Thirdly, the ' original' four viz., the *srngara,* the *ran-dra,* the *vira* and the *bibhatsa* are explained mostly in sloka-s while the other four are explained either in laryia metre or in prose. Similarly Chapter VII opens with an explanatory passage in prose and throughout the chapter we find materials of probably three different texts, as (a) sloka-s, (b) sloka-s quoted under the heading *bhavati tafrra slokab* (to this effect runs a sloka)[a] and (c) arya-s all of which are quoted as *bhavati catra arya* etc. This is not the place to suggest any clear-cut theory about the book but one reasonable explanation -seems to be that Bharata, traditionally or truly reputed to be the author of a work on drama, must have also written a short treatise on the theory of *Rasa* and that some scholar later on became responsible for handing down the two together. It is further interesting to note that the topics in Chapter VIII are directly connected with the general discussion in the first five chapters and are in direct continuation of Chapter V. In the latter, the remodelled purva-ranga

3. Cf. VII 6-10, 15, 26, 28, 54, etc.

has been described. After that should come the play itself. As said in I 104-118 and XXI 123-5 a play " is an imitational representation so to say, of the various modes and movements of the people in the matter-of-fact world." This representation, says Bharata, is called *abhinaya* (VIII-7) and thus opens Chapter VIII describing the four different ways i.e. *abhinaya-s* of reproduction and representation.. Those four ways are

(i) angika, gesture-acting [Chapters VII-XIV]
(ii) vacika, speech-delivery [XV-XXII]
(iii) aharya, make-up etc. XXIII, and
(iv) s&ttvika,[4] emotion-display XXIV.

(i) *gesture-acting.*

Under this heading are described the various gestures : (a) of head, eyes, brows, lips and neck (VIII); (b) of hands (IX); (c) of chest, waist and hips (X); (d) of feet (XI and XII); (e) of silent acting called *gati* (XIII); and (f) of movements on the stage like exit, entrance etc. (XIV).

(ii) *vacikabhinaya, speech-delivery* [XV-XXII]

Under this heading are described

Phonetics (XV 10-33)
Various metres (XV 41-119 and the whole of XVI)
Figures of Speech and Poetics (XVII 44-119)
Sanskrit and Prakrt dialects with their distribution (XVIII and XIX)
Ten kinds of dramatic representation (XX):
Treatment of dramatic incidents—*itivrtta* (XXI) and,
The form of literary and artistic development—*vrtti* (XXII)

No amount of patience or patriotism, much less of reason, would induce anyone to believe that all these passages have a legitimate place in a book on drama. To question their genuineness in the context is not to question their intrinsic value. Besides the text itself is here so clumsy in arrangement. If we want a continuity of thought

4. Note that in VIII-10 the author says that sattvika is already described in VII. It is a mistake. The sattvika in VII is described as a *bhava* and not as abhinaya/ Besides the sattvika referred to as an abhinaya is actually described in) XXIV-1. "aatve karyah prayatnas tu'; one should attempt to show feelings and emotions.

We shall have to arrange the text as follows. XV 1-9 and 34-40; XVIII23, 29-35, 44a and 48b; XIX 37ff etc. Thus it will be seen that in addition to a number of verses two entire chapters, XVI and XVIII, could be safely omitted. As a matter of fact the last verse of XVI shows that that chapter concerns a *kavya-bandha,* poetical work, more than *natya* literature.

In the passages as re-constructed above we have the description and the explanation of *vacikabohmaya* after which we are led to the ten varieties of drama. It is strange, however, to find that the matter in XX-XXII is *included* in vacikabhinaya (since the opening verse of XXIII says that *now aharya abhinaya* is to be described etc.) The information in these three chapters is more for the dramatist than for the actor and yet it is called *'abhinaya'* It was for this reason that we have interpreted the word ' *abhi-naya'* as way or method. Thus the three chapters describing the different methods of the dramatists seem to form the earliest nucleus of a treatise on dramaturgy. The various definitions and metrical explanations in these chapters are repeated almost word to word in the DaSarupaka of Dhananjaya and the Sahitya-Darpaaja of Vishwanatha (both works on dramaturgy including poetics). Bharata first enumerates *all the details* (sanhgraha), defines *all of them* one by one (Karika) and then explains them in the same order (nirukta). This *samgraha-karikdmritkta* style of Bharata makes the book difficult to follow in comparison with the style of Dhananjaya who mentions, defines and explains *one detail* before he goes to the next In an introductory passage to his work the latter says as much :

vyakime! manda-buddhnam jayate mati-vibhramaht
tasya arthas *tat-padair* eva samksipya kriyate 'njasa

" As the text is diffused the ignorant are liable to be confused ; so I am abridging the original in the very words of the original'' (D. R. 1-5). It is clear that the text referred to here is some *natya-sastra* which, however, has been identified with a rasa-sastra by the commentator who says : vyakie viksipte vistine ca rasdSastre manda-buddhinam purhsam matimoho bhavati, tena *tasya ndtya-vedasya* arthah tatpadair eva sarhksipya rjuvrttya kriyate iti " As the treatise *on Rasa* is scattered, ill-arranged and exhaustive the ignorant ara likely to be confused; therefore the information of the *natya-veda* is presented here abridged in the original words and arranged systematically." From the use of the words natya-veda and rasa-sastra it is dear that Bharata's nat*ya-sastra,* as available today,

is being referred to. It is equally clear that neither Dhanafljaya nor his commentator Dhanika likes the introduction of *Rasas* in a book on dramaturgy.

(iii) *aharyabhinaya* (XXIII) and (iv) *sattvika or samanyabhinaya* (XXIV)

In XXIII the *aharyabhinaya* is described. That phrase seems to include the " make-up " of the characters as well as the stage-setting (XXIII-1). In the next chapter, the last i.e. the sattvika abhinaya is described. The following three chapters—XXV, XXVI and XXVII —describe miscellaneous things like the characteristics of the various characters, the *citrabhinaya* (a more or less insipid repetition of and minor additions to the chapters on an*gikabhinaya)* and sundry details like directions to or description of the audience etc. In the next six chapters the various musical instruments, tunes etc. are described. The only thing to be noted! here is the opening of XXVIII in the style of a commentator and in prose, as :—

atodyavidhim idanim vyakhyasyamah, tad yatha; **"now we** shall explain the rules on musical instruments" etc.

Once again the different characters (types or standardised ones) with their various functions are described in XXXIV and XXXV. In the last chapter XXXVI—the names of the sages who are asking questions to Bharata are enumerated (a bold and brilliant afterthought !)• The *purva-ranga* is once again described and finally the glory of drama, of Bharata and his sons and descendants and heirs and successors is sung. The curtain drops, as if wearily, after a verse in the longest—sragdham—metre and in the fashion of later *bharata-vakyas.* In writing such a long and dragging work perhaps Bharata had improved his poetic capacity enough to write a single verse in the longest metre !

B. CRITICISM OF THE INFORMATION IN THE N. S.

From the summary above one thing is clear, that the present NatyaSastra, far from being the earliest, is quite a later composition. The accurate analysis, the copious information and the critical vein (though concealed) presume the earlier existence of numerous plays and numerous attempts to understand them. It is evident that at the time the *Natyaiastra* assumed its present form Drama had established itself as a popular and a regular feature in social life. What does it matter whether Bharata wrote it or was merely responsible

for it as long as the book holds up Drama to the admiration of the readers and as the only entertainment common to all, irrespective of caste and culture ? No wonder then that regular and well-constructed playhouses existed at this time. The book reveals a historical sense in describing the different types of playhouses. In the early days, such shows might have taken place in the open. But, says Bharata the demons took it into their heads to create disturbances. So it was considered advisable to construct well-guarded places (L 55-79,, II 1-27). On certain occasions, if the Manager or Patron so decided,, plays were represented in the open (XIV 64). The time of the day» too, was prescribed for performances. Generally speaking, midnight, noon-time, twilight and meal-times were prohibited (which shows that Bharata had an eye on the business side of Drama !). The actual times were fixed as under[5] :

(i) A play which is pleasant to the ears and based on tradition[6] is to be represented during the earlier part of the day (purvahna);

(ii) A play wherein the Sattva quality (in acting and in representation) predominates and where there is plenty of instrumental music—is to be staged in the latter part of the day (aparahna);

(iii) A play in the Kaisiki style dealing with *srngara rasa* and with plenty of music and singing is to be staged early at night (i.e. immediately after sunset); and

(iv) A play of high sentiments, treating mostly the *karma rasa* is to be staged in the morning.

Attempts have been made to show that this time-allotment is more or less based on scientific and hygienic and psychological considerations. In spite of their ingenuity, these attempts presume toa much to convince. As a matter of fact, it appears that the four-fold division above relates to the four different types or styles or *vrttis** of drama. The play referred to in (i) is obviously the *bhsrati* type ; that in (ii) is *sattvati* more or less ; the third is certainly *kaisikl;* and the last, if not *mabhafi,* is one that is different from the first three. We have shown in an earlier place[7] that the traditional and continuous stages in the evolution of Sanskrit drama were *bharati,*

5. XXVII 89-93.

6. Cf. *itihdso maya srstah sa suresu niyujyatam* (1-19). The very first production is called *itihasa* 0= tradition).

7. Chap. III.

sattvatU kaisitti and *vrabhati.* Further we are told in 1-17 what each of the four Vedas contributed to the making up of drama. Let us place all this information side by side :

1. bharati	Recitation	Rgveda	pathya	purvanha
2. sattvati	Recitation with gestures	Samaveda	chanting	aparanha
3. kaisiki	Impersonation	Yajurveda	abhinaya	early night
4. arabhatl	Representation	Atharvana	rasa	early morning

It will be seen from the above that style has more to do with the time of performance. Where there is mere recitation, the earlier part of the day is more suitable both from the reciter's as well as the listener's point of view. Early morning, fresh and energetic, is as suited for emotional acting. Where gesture plays an important part the light of the advanced day (aparanha) is more convenient. Similarly, for impersonation to be successful (especially with the conveniences of those days) night-time is the best. Bharata, however, prescribes only early night for two reasons : (i) ladies take part in plays of kaisiki style and (ii) the type of the playhouses was not suited for night performances. Nowhere in the text do we read of a roofed playhouse. Under these circumstances night performances were possible—unless a play was staged for the *elite* within the four walls of a well-lit palace or mansion. Bharata, however, mentions with a touch of humour (conscious or unconscious) that he is opposed to night-representations on principle! Drama, he says, would be the destroyer of sleep (natyam nidra-viniasanam, XXVII 92). Let us only hope that the sage is too sincere to insinuate.

Open or closed, the problems.;of the playhouse did not seriously affect the staging. A dramatic representation was as desirable as any other ritual and as much, if not more, entertaining. Not only was the drama a divine inspiration drawing from the four holy Vedas but the incidents (vrtta) and the treatment (vrtti) in it were equally divine in origin and conception. The very first production viz., the *samavakara* called " the Churning of Nectar " dealt with the doings of the gods (IV-4). The second show—a d*ima* variety—dealt with the .burning of the Three Walls by God Siva (IV-11). Further, in the very early stages Siva himself undertook the task of introducing music and dance in the performance. Similarly, the various *vrttis*,

i.e. the modes of treatment originated from the fight of Divine Lord Acyuta with the demons Madhu and Kaitabha (XXII *2ft).* It is DO wonder that drama, under such auspices, should soon develop into ten varieties, though it *is* a wonder that no new varieties were introduced by the dramatists or recognised by the critics ever since. Perhaps the later dramatists were less original or the later critics less observant or the sanctity attached to Bharatas name was too solemn to allow any departures. As for Bharata himself, he enumerates and classifies and defines and explains the ten varieties. Incidentally he has pointed out some general features (XXI). Thus any play, in general, has) five main ways of knitting *(samdhi)* its incidents. To open with, the story of the play is narrated in outline *(mukha);* the particular incident or incidents that give rise to a dramatic situation should then be introduced *(prati-mukha)*; afterwards should be -described the situation that heightens the dramatic sense by coming in conflict with or contrast to the preceding incident *(garbha);* a dramatic way should be suggested to steer through this conflict *(avimarsa* or *vimmsa)*; and finally the desired end should develop *(nirvahaiia).* We do admire Bharata for his power of observation and understanding. It will appear, however, that here Bharata has done nothing great except coining some technical words. The five stages of development mentioned above are just the five members of a syllogism in Indian logic. In a logical syllogism there is first the *pratijna,* a statement or a sort of enunciation of the thing to be proved. A *hetu* or a logical reason is then stated. Thirdly, there is a *drstanta* or analogy which is applied *(nigama)* in the fourth statement to the thing to be proved with the result that the thing is proved *(siddhanta).* Likewise, according to Bharata, the dramatist first summarises the developments in his play *[mukha),* then cites an incident which would bear out such a development *(pratimukha),* gives examples similar or dissimilar *(garbha),* equates the example to the problem in hand *(avimarsa)* and thus arrives at the promised development *(nirvahaqa).* This logically strict analysis, as will be shown later, was responsible for a series of stereotyped plays. Perhaps Bharata did not realise that art was not logic but magic, that it was not fixed but fresh in form and power.

(C) PRE-BHARATA DRAMAS.

It cannot be supposed that Bharata produced this analysis without any models before him ; nor should it be held that from the very

beginning plays were written in Sanskrit with such an artistic treatment. We have already suggested the probable stages of the development of early Sanskrit Drama. A closer study of Bharata's ten varieties of representations supports that suggestion of ours to a great extent. Of the ten varieties four are of the simplest type; not that they are mere short sketches but the mode of treatment in these four —the *anka*, the *prahasana*, the *bhana* and the *tnthi*—is elementary. Each of these four has only two of the five *samdhi-s* or ways of development viz., the first and the last. That means that none of these *is* in any way different from mere recitation. Bharata himself addsexplicitly that the style (XX 100). The other three also are probably in the *bharati* style.[8] As an artistic improvement on these four, we have the *vya~* ***yoga* and the *ihamrga*. These have no *garbha* and *avimarsa san-*** *dhis*. A story is told, an incident represented and the play ends. The *ihamrga* deals with heavenly men and women (XX 82) and the *vyayoga* with a well-known hero and a few female characters (XX 94). Battles are to be represented in both (and probably these battles are described in songs). The *samvakara* and the dima are a further improvement. They lack only one *samdhi* viz., the *avimarsa*. We have already seen that Bharata mentions these two (IV 4, 11) as the "first" dramatic representations. By "first" it is not **meant that** they are the earliest of the ten varieties. Before these, there was no "impersonation"—and so probably Bharata does not include them among representational performances. Lastly, we have the na*taka* and the *prakarana*. These two have all the five *samdhi-s*. A true-to-life representation (i.e. an attempt for it) might be believed in at this stage. Let us, now, arrange the ten varieties as under :

Source :	***Mode :***	***Varieties :***	***Stage*** **:**
R. V.	Bharati	anka, bhana, vithi, prahasana	1
S. V.	Sattvati	vyayoga, Ihamrga	2
Y. V.	Kaisiki	samavakara, dima	3
A. V.	Arabhati	nataka, prakarana	4

How does the above arrangement help us to find out the dramatist predecessors of Bharata? The answer to this question will,.

8. Cf. D. R. Ill 50.

under the present circumstances, be more a reasonable guess than a dogmatic decision. With later works on dramaturgy like the D. R. and the S. D. no difficulty arises since their authors or commentators explain their observations with reference to particular plays. No such satisfaction can be had in the N. S. Nevertheless there are situations which are provoking or tempting in this respect. For example, in XIII are described the various gestures to represent certain movements. In XIII 88 we are told how a chariot-rider and a charioteer are to be represented as moving on their ride. In XIII 90 the author tells us how a ride in the sky or atmosphere are to be shown by bodily gestures. In Sanskrit plays we are not certain that a chariot passes through the atmosphere anywhere except in Act VII of kalidasa's Abhijinana-sakuntalam and the first act of Vik. Similarly in XIX Bharata is giving suggestions for the names of certain characters in plays. With reference to the name of a courtesan he suggests,

datta mitra ca senla iti vesyanamani karayet

" The name of a courtesan (should end) in -datta, -mitra or -sena." (XIX-33).

Though the first two types of names are common in Sanskrit plays both for courtesans as well as court-ladies, the last occurs only in the Mrcchakatika of Sudraka where the courtesan-heroine is named Vasanta-sena.[0] Again if Bharata says that death should not be represented on the stage there is stronger reason to believe that he must have known, and felt what it is to see, death on the stage in a play like the Urubhanga ascribed to Bhasa. Whatever that be, we hasten to repeat that this is not strong evidence (perhaps no evidence) to arrive at a conclusion. At the same time, it is undeniable that Bharata did have some ' standard' plays before formulating his rules. We know of no other earlier ' standard' plays than those of Bhasa, Kalidasa and Sudraka. If, however, the author of the N. S. is deliberately concealing such references in order that his book be claimed (and acclaimed) most antiquarian we refuse to be critical and to spoil the humour of the situation. We will bear in our mind, but we shall not mention it aloud, that the author of the available version of the N. S. does know the plays of Bhasa, of Kalidasa and of Sudraka.

9. In the play Carudatta ascribed to Bhasa this character is simply called nayika (heroine).

CHAPTER XVI

THE PLAYS OF KING 6RI HAR$A

Great writers, as all other great men, rise like the morning sun. They bring with them a freshness of feeling and vigour and vitality. They disperse before them the long accumulated darkness of the past and illuminate beneath them the path of future. And like the morning sun they cast a long shadow wherein the substance is given an appearance of undue prominence. In this respect great writers are a boon and a curse, a boon of life to the world and a curse of stagnation to literature. Prospero keeps Ariel as his prisoner. So does the genius keep the soaring young spirits as its prisoners. It is a great advantage to most modern societies that they are led by mediocrities. A genius that dazzles when seen also blinds in following. The study in the last chapter illustrates the general tendency of accepting great minds as standard for all times. The plays of Kialidasa and his fore-runners were studied, analysed, and because they were felt as works of unusual merit, were held up as models to be copied. Kalidasa is not to blame. The very example of a genius breaking down all shackles becomes a new and a stronger shackle to his admirers. Left to himself Kalid&sa would have advised (if he had no better business) any aspiring young writer in such words : " Live and live thy own life ; see, feel and write." But the critics had the advantage of him and said, "see KalidSsa, feel what *he* describes and repeat what *he* writes." No wonder that for a long time to come the history of Sanskrit as well as of some vernacular literatures is a race in imitating Kalidasa and his class. In the fore-front of this race is His Majesty King Sri Harsa of Kanoj who ruled about €10 A.D.—642 A.D.

Sri Harsa is credited with the authorship of three Sanskrit plays —Priyadarsika, Ratnavali and Naganandam. It is not of great interest to us whether the king himself or his court poets under their patron's name wrote these plays. Genius makes no pretence to the authorship of these plays, and between the patron-king and his court poets like Banja, the king has decidedly an advantage. He need not have written these plays and still we would have found out the poet in him. His adventures and his accomplishments as a king (and also as

described in the Haisa-carita of bana) and as a connoisseur reveal a mind keenly susceptible to surroundings. In his life-time he had the privilege of belonging, by turns, to the two great religions of the day viz., Hinduism and Buddhism. His experience was varied and unusual. His father (died, his only sister was lost and in searching her his elder brother died ; his sister returned, widowed and wedded to Buddhism and left a deep impression on him. When quite a young man he was called upon to rule the kingdom. On his death he left behind him an Empire and three Sanskrit plays.

All the three plays—P. D., Rat. and Nag.—show one hand through, and one mind behind, them gradually improving in craft and .confidence. The two plays—P. D. and Rat.—deal with the story of that popular hero Vatsaraja or Udayana, king of Kausambi They are different from one another because their titles differ from one another, and the titles differ from one another because the names of the two heroines differ from one another. Essentially there is no difference between them and no justification for two of them. The superficial difference is due to the passage of time from the writing of the one to the writing of the other. P. D. opens in diffidence, •develops into confusion and ends in chaos and convention. As the play opens, King Vatsa has escaped from prison along with Vasavadatta, his wife. His general has defeated and killed Vindhyaketu in the south and has brought with him Princess Priyadarsika (heroine) mistaking her for the daughter of the slain adversary. In this disguise the heroine is left in the queen's tutelage. After a time the king sees her. She is now grown up and king Vatsa falls in love with her. Then follows the usual type of court intrigue under Vidsaka's auspices. A play written about the King is to be staged. Priya•darsika is assigned the queen's role in the play. And here the real king gets the chance of making love to the heroine (as the play-.queen). The intriguer is intrigued. Not interested in the play the Vidusaka goes to sleep and babbles out the truth. The queen is angry. Her anger is further incensed because the king has done nothing to save, her uncle who has lost his kingdom and liberty. By the time the king asks forgiveness his general returns after successfully saving the queen's uncle and reinstating him. The queen is pleased at this gracious move on the part of her husband and returns it by setting free the so-long-imprisoned heroine. That girl, however, "has swallowed poison in despair and is saved only by the marical powers (charms) of the king. It transpires ultimately that the

heroine is no other than the daughter of the queen's uncle. In accordance with an earlier betrothal this love-marriage (?) is brought about by the queen herself.

A similar story with Kalidasa has lent itself to a lively dramatic treatment in the Malav. But Hansa's P. D. is too poor in execution. The whole of Act I is a sort of viskamhhaka prosaically narrating the background of the play. In Act I the heroine does not appear on the stage at all. Act II is in imitation of Kalidsasa. The heroine goes to the pond and is tormented by the bees as Sakuntala is and Vatsa, like Dusyanta, steps forward to her help. When Priyadarsika is calling for help the Vidusaka says :

bhavati, sakala-prthvi-paritrana-samarthana-Vatsarajena partitriayamana cetim indivarikam akrandasi (Lady, you are being protected by Vatsaraja, the) strong protector of the whole world, and yet you call upon the maid Indivarika for help); when Sakuntala too cries for help (A. Sak. I) her friends tease her by saying ; ke avam, paritratum ., Duisyantam akranda———raja-raksitavyani tapovanani nama (who are we to iprotect you? A hermitage is to be protected by the king. Call upon Dusyanta). The situation, in A. Sak. is more dramatic, more genuine and more enjoyable since Dusyanta is actually standing there, known to the audience but not seen by the girls. In P. D. not only the audience but the heroine also knows that she is already in the arms of Vatsa. Again, in Act HI we have a play within the play. It has proved too much for the young writer. The scene is laid (in the main play) near the pond as the Act opens and then is clumsily shifted to the preksagara, the Music Hall of the palace ! As the play-within-the-play proceeds, the Vidusaka, like his caste-fellow in the Malav., goes to sleep and mutters out the truth. The description of the music (111-10) and the speech of the Kancukin (III-3) are repeated word for word in Nag. 1-14 and IV-1 respectively. In Act IV the hero saves the heroine's life by means of his magical powers. Magical powers are again introduced (though this time the hero is deprived of them) in Rat. IV. As a matter of fact, it appears as if the author wrote the Rat. simply to improve on and remove the defects in the P.D. In the Rat. the heroine sees the hero in Act I as the latter is being worshipped by the queen while the hero and the heroine in the P.D. see each other for the first time in Act II. With only two Acts remaining there is less scope for development in the P. D. while in the Rat. the love-story proceeds briskly from the beginning of Act II.

Nor was the dramatist prepared to write more than four Acts. The story demanded but the conventional rules refused more than four Acts to a natika. So like a street-artist harassed by a policeman, His Majesty sri Harsa packs off his materials with inartistic hurry. Once again in P. D. Ill the heroine's friend tells the Vidusaka that the heroine is in love with the king; and the Vidugaka returns the •compliment by telling as plainly that the king also is in love with the heroine. This is not even good story-telling, much less a dramatic situation. It will not do for a dramatist to forget that no character can speak to another character (except, in the case of bad acting) without being heard by the audience. Harsa seems .to have found this out since in Rat. II he tries to make an identical situation more dramatic but utilising a *myna* bird. What the heroine tells her friend is heard by the *myna* which repeats it later in the presence of the king. Similarly, the clumsiness of the play-within-the-play of the P D. is avoided in the Rat. where the heroine, through the cleverness of the Vidu§aka, is brought in the disguise of the queen herself. For the same purpose of dressing the heroine in the queen's robes the dramatist had to use a play-within-the-play in the P. D. Lastly, Act IV of the P. D. is a hopeless jumble of events. In a similar situation in Rat. IV, the minister Yaugandharayaioa brings in a magician who sets the palace on fire. Viasavadatta suddenly remembers that the heroine is fettered and the king immediately rushes to help. The fire was an illusion created by the magician. Otherwise, says Yaugandharayaoa, how could the king be brought to the heroine? Apart from that, the incident reveals[1] the nobility of Vasavadatta and the heroic love of the king for the heroine. In the P.D. two situations are introduced either of which could have brought about the freedom of the imprisoned heroine, the help rendered by the king to her uncle had put the queen in such a gracious mood that •she was prepared to set the heroine free. Or, the heroine swallows poison which fact! would have equally served the purpose. As it is, the attempted suicide is absurd and superfluous—unless the dramatist was keen to show that his hero was in no way inferior to a -snake-charmer! The heroine, however, found out that it was too dangerous to attempt suicide at the end of the play and so, in the Rat., she tries that ruse in Act III. Not only that, the heroine of the Rat. is in the queen's robes while attempting suicide. The King (hero) thinking that the queen herself is committing suicide rushes to her, takes her in his arms, protests his love and lo! the

real queen comes on the stage and detects, what she thinks, a treachery—the second one within a few minutes. This situation adds, to the gaiety of the comedy. On the whole, the Rat shows its author as a dramatist of no ordinary talents. The very ideas and situations of the P. D. are repeated in the Rat. but their exquisite polish in the latter shows not only the boldness but the originality of the artist. The attempt of Har?a to write successfully within the restricted field of rules of dramaturgy was at last achieved in the Rat. Perhaps Harsa was too good a king to set to his subjects a lesson in revolt by himself flouting the rules of dramaturgy. Nevertheless, he seems to have made a bold attempt to break loose in originality. That attempt was a failure. So after having written Nagananda in that attempt " he reverted to the early methods and rewrote his Priyadarsika; in other words he wrote the Ratnavali.

Naganandam is of course, a play different from both the Priyadarsika and the Ratnavali. The fact that the Naganandam deals with a hero who ends as a Buddhist is of no relevance. It is only in the last two Acts that the play takes a Buddhistic tone; in the first three the hero—Jimutavahana—does not do or say what cannot be done or said by a non-Buddhist. What makes Nag. different from the other two plays is the very basis of dramatic treatment. The two natika-s represent love within the court-life and the palace-walls. In the Nag. love transcends fort-walls and national boundaries. It is love that we have; met with in Kalidasa's plays, especially in the A. :sak. So, as in the latter, the opening scene in Nag. is laid in a hermitage. The two plays ran exactly on the same lines, the only difference being that the A. sak. is conceived by a master-mind. Jimutavahana enters the hermitage, his right eye throbs (cf. A. iSak. 1-14) he meets the heroine and the two fall in love. Love in Kalidiasa's play pours forth ' in profuse strains of unpremeditated art'; in the Nag. it is premeditated since Gauri, her goddess, has told the heroine in a vision of the coming of this stranger lover. Mitravasu, the heroine's brother, comes to the hero with a proposal on behalf of his sister. Jimutavahana demurs not knowing that the girl he has fallen in love with and the girl proposed are one and the same. The heroine seeing from cover all these attempts, in a fit of disappointment, attempts suicide. To make matters worse, the hero has just sketched the lady of his heart and MalayavatI, the heroine,

does not know that it is herself. Jimutavahana rushes to help and saves the girl Now it is known that the heroine MalayavatJ and the sister Mitrivasu and the girl sketched are all one and the same. The lovers run into each others arms and by the end of Act III the marriage is celebrated with the sanction of the hero's parents. In Act IV, Jimutavahana comes to know of the sad plight of the Naga-s (snakes) who are murdered in numbers by Garuda, the Celestial Hawk. To avert a total extinction of his race, the King of the Naga-s makes an arrangement with Garuda to send to the latter each day one naga to be devoured. The hero, wandering by the sea-shore, is moved by the wailing of a naga-mother whose son is to be that day's victim. Jimutavahana offers himself up in the place of that naga and is carried away by Garuda. In Act V the old parents and the wife of the hero come to know of his fate and prepare for self-immolation. In the meanwhile Garuda retires with the hero mortally wounded, admires the selflessness and the moral courage of his victim, recognises him as the great Jimutavvahana and finally relents and promises to stop his murderous activities. In the presence of his family and friends the hero succumbs to his wounds. Immediately the goddess Gauri, appears in answer to Malayavati s prayer and brings the hero back to life. Garuda on his part fetches nectar from heavens and does more than he has promised by resuscitating all the naga-s he had killed. Thus the play gets the title of Naga-nandam i.e. the *ananda,* bliss or resuscitation of the Nagas. Let us imagine the *manda* of Harsa, too, who, in imitation of the great ASoka after his Kalinga campaign, might have promised, like the Garuda in the play, to cease his murderous activities and wars. It would not be fair otherwise.

What was the object of the dramatist in writing this play ? It Is usually held that Sri Han?a wrote it either to extol and preach Buddhism, or that he wrote; it when he himself had been converted to Buddhism, The Nandl, opening verse, is a prayer to Buddha ; in the body of the play the Brahmin fool Vidusaka is made ridiculous with his sacred thread torn and his ignorance held up to scorn. Such features are quoted in evidence of the Buddhistic tendency of the play. As for the fun poked at the Vidugaka we need not be so critical. Even in the apparently non-Buddhisti' Priyadarska Harsa makes his hero ridicule the Viduisaka in these words ; veda-samikhyaya eva aveditam brahmanyam, "You have proved your Brahmanhood

by mentioning the number of Vedas."[1] The ignorance of the Vidusaka in this respect is the stock-in-trade of Sanskrit dramatists irrespective of their religion. Similarly, the opening prayer to Buddha does not necessarily convey that the author is a Buddhist. Buddha has a place among the ten incarnations. If iSrt Hansa intended to sing the glories of Buddhism in this play he must be condemned as a very poor artist. The first three Acts of the play would be so disproportionate, the remaining two Acts so insufficient to convey the dramatist's intention. Secondly, a verse common to all his three prologues reads,

loke h'ari ca bodhi-sattva-caritam

" The story of the Bodhi-sattva is popular eriough."

But the story in the play is about Jimutavahana. True, Jimutavahana is mentioned in other authorities as a Bodhisattva and in the play itself Garuda speaks of the hero as a Bodhisattva.[2] It is rather strange that the hero should be referred to as Bodhisattva once only in the five Acts of the play. In other earlier plays Jimutavahana was mentioned as a Bodhi-sattva. And yet Sri Harsa does not insist. In these circumstances we are) inclined to believe that our author had no idea of depicting a Buddhist hero. The conception of Universal Love im Buddhism came to the aid of Harsa who wanted to depict Ideal Love by providing a hero from its pages. The background and the atmosphere in Act I make a brilliant beginning for such a story of love. But by the end of Act HI the play slipped through his fingers and descended to the level of an average love-story. In the A. Sak. Kalidaasa introduced a clever trick by taking Dusyanta away to a field of apparently higher responsibility viz., the Kingdom. But our Buddhistic hero has lost his kingdom, can go nowhere and ultimately in Act III has to dismiss the heroine by describing her poetically in one verse. What is our hero to do when; the author himself is at his wit's end ? In a fit of desperateness on the parts of both the dramatist and of his hero, the way of death had to be chosen. To show love at its highest the hero had to die; but he could not die a legitimate death since rules of drama prohibited it. So Harsa had to

1. Act II; of course, it need not be added that the Vidusaka mentions the Vedas as four, five and six. Cf. also Act II of Bhasa's Avimaraka where the Vidusaka mentions Ramayana as a treatise on dramaturgy!

2. kim bahunia bodhi-sattva eva ayam maya vyapiditah VI.

fall back on a religious excuse. Jimutavahana dies on the stage because he is a Bodhisattva.[3] He is not bound by the rules formulated by sages of Vedic cult. Thus the play closes as tamely as it opens brilliantly. And now the list of Harsa's failures included both Priyadarsikia and Nagananda. we have shown above how the defects of the P. D. were improved upon in the Rat Likewise, some of the unsuccessful artifices in the Nag. are retouched in the Rat. The •sketching of one lover (heroine) by the other (hero) in the Nag. is utilised! to better purposes and with greater effect in the Rat. The fooling of the Vidusaka in Nag. Ill with a bad pun on the word 'varn-' (to paint or to describe), the scenes of revelry again in Nag. Ill are more picturesquely and more discreetly depicted in Rat. I.

On the whole, it appears that Harsa was keen to improve. Even in his last play, however, there are serious blemishes. The unnecessary repetition at length of the dialogue between Sagarika and Susaimgata in Act II through the *myna* bird is an illustration to the point The king could have known it in any other way less annoying to the audience. Besides, a monkey has to be introduced, let loose to bring about such a situation. What a monkey to upset and frighten the whole palace ! True, Kalidasa also lets a monkey loose in his Malavikagnimitram, but, it does not develop such frightful and fanciful •consequences. This is one of the major defects of sri Harsa as a dramatist. His art knows no economy.

The real trouble with Harsa was that he was least qualified to be a dramatist. A knowledge, however thorough, of all the rules of -dramaturgy is not in itself sufficient to write a good play. Sri Harsa, like most of the Sanskrit dramatists, borrows the story from an earlier source. But when it comes to re-telling it in a dramatic form he fails. His characters are mostly story-tellers and as such we are not Interested in what happens to them. Even in three or four principal •characters there is no life at all. Either they are dummies stuffed in the traditional form or they are the mouthpieces of the poetic author. We know beforehand what his characters are going to say and what we do not know would be irrelevant lyrical outburst. His Vidusaka, for example, has no individuality. He is not as naturally a fool or as naturally a scoundrel as he should have been. On all occasions where

3. Note the word bodhisattva' used only once in the play and that too when the hero is dead (vyapaditah).

he makes a fool of himself you can hear the author prompting and pushing behind. Similarly, except in the Ratniavali to some degree„ the heroines of Har?a are dull automata who submit to destiny in a ritualistic manner, submit to their lover in a conventional manner, and are married at last more out of pity for their helplessness than in the name of true love. With such a Vidusaka as his friend and such a heroine as his beloved the hero cannot but be a school-master ; only he is more temperamental since he lives amidst luxury and beauty. From a corner of a stage, he declaims (i.e. dictates to the school-boys) poetic description of the scene, of the heroine, of sunrise and sunset at the end of Act I or II or III. To take an example, the whole of Rat. I is poetry, pure and simple. Of the eighteen long verses in the main scene no less than thirteen are- sung by the king. He describes the festivities (5 verses), his queen (4 verses), and the evening (2 verses). The fact that sri Harsa now and then rises to great poetic heights does not mitigate his defects as a dramatist. Whenever Harsa, finds that the play is not moving in action he hustles in characters like so many errand-boys and hushes them out with as much lack of tact and grace. Thus, to take an instance, in Nag. IV, the hero is wandering along on the beach. He wonders what the mounds! are. He pushes in Mitriavasu to say that those mounds are not the Malaya ranges but heaps of nagas' (snakes) bones. Then he explains the fate of the nagas. No sooner is this information given (to the audience) than a messenger comes to say that Mitriavasu is urgently wanted by his father. Why ? Let the servant himself answer ; pratiharah :—(karme) evam evam " Attendant:—(whispers) so-and-so. In other words, Mitravasu is packed off by the dramatist.

It is needless to add examples. The only marvel is how such a fine poet turned out to be such a poor dramatist. As a patron, he migh have been pampered by the court-pundits; as a king, His Majest] might have less scope for insight and observation. But this is no all. What is more to the point is the artificiality of Sri Harsa dramas He wrote plays, we are almost compelled to say, nc because, he wanted or felt to study the various aspects of life. Poetr to him was an accomplishment and not an urge; Drama with hii was a product not of life but of learning—learning the rules c dramaturgy. Bharata says that his first performance was given the occasion of Indra festival (N.S. I 56). So Harsa's Naganandam staged, as is said in the prologue, on Indra festival day. Similar[1]

a natika, treated in Spigara-rasa, could be staged only at spring time-so the P. D. and the Rat. are staged on the occasion of the Spring festival. It is for this reason that sri Harsa mentions in his prologues four requisites for a successful performance, viz., (i) a clever poet, (ii) an appreciative audience, (iii) skilled actors, and (iv) a popular story. Though it is gratifying to note that Harsa takes only 25 p.c. credit for himself, it was an ill day that handed over one of the most popular forms of literature into the hands of a king. The rule of law and order was transferred to the realm of literature. Who knows if Harsa did not employ some pedants to formulate new rules with reference to his plays alone and did not thus give his royal sanction, by writing in the decaying Sanskrit language, to the banishment of intellectual democrats and artistic anarchists ?[4]

4. Unfortunately we have Dhanika, the commentator of Dhananjaya's Dasarupaka, quoting and illustrating mostly from Sri Harsa's plays.

CHAPTER XVII

A REVIVAL

(Visakhddatta and Bhavabhuti)

We saw in the last chapter that with King sri Harsa, Sanskrit drama assumed a definite form and was already on its way to standardisation. The increasing distance between the written Sanskrit and its spoken dialects and the literary fashion set by such a powerful king turned Sanskrit drama into an intellectual luxury. We might even go further and say that immediately after Har§a play-writing was placed on the curriculum of a; poet's degree. We might imagine, on the analogy of the restoration period in England, a plethora of plays—small plays by small writers. Most probably the same theme viz., the love-affairs of a king satisfied the poetic fancies of each and every writer. At a time when play-writing is a literary fashion a poet as well as a philosopher or a grammarian can legitimately be expected to write a play. The result is inevitable. Drama ceases to be what it should be, both functionally and technically. That such was the case could be seen from the strong protests of two great dramatists after Harsa. Visakhadatta, the author of Mudra-Rak$asa, speaks of plays of bad writers which begin one way and end quite in another one. (kukavi-krta-natakasya iva anyanmukhe anyannirvahance). He is sick of pedants writing or taking interest in drama. In the prologue he tells us that he is writing his play for an audience that is particularly appreciative of (this branch of) literature (kavya-visesa-vedinyam parisadi prayunjanasya). He himself has studied drama in all its aspects. In a splendid passage (IV. 3) he compares a dramatist to a statesman. Both are capable of working on slender materials, or developing the same concealing at the same time the possibilities, and of keeping that development throughout under their control even as they raise therein intellectual pro lems. To write a drama you must be a dramatist first and last-thundered the other writer viz. Bhavabhuti, the author of three plays the Mabavira-carita, the Malati-Madhava, and the Uttara-Rama-carita. "You have studied the Vedas, the Upanisadas, Samkhya

and Yoga lores? Yes? You think you are clever, don't you? But know that all your learning is of no use for play-writing. The powers of a good dramatist lie in his close observation, in his subtle and succinct style and in clever presentation;' (MM. I 10). So he says of Malati-Madhava, his social play, that the sentiments therein are depicted in all their subtlety, actions charming and reasonable and that though a love-story it has sense) and dignity, and an unusual plot developed in a skilful dialogue. (MM. 16) Bhavabhuti has correctly sensed the defects of earlier plays dealing with stupid, stereotyped and undignified love-plots in dull and unnatural accents. He reports his audience as tired of sickly love-stories. " Let us have a play depicting the heroic sentiments of cultured minds, a clash of characters "and the subtleties thereof.'" This is their request to the stage-manager of the Mahavira-carita (I 2, 3).

From still another point of view these two dramatists seem to protest against Sri Harsa's type of play. From its very origin, as well as in the hands of playwrights like Kalidasa and Sudraka, drama was a product of contemporary social soil and surroundings. In popularising the Natika form, SRI Harsa introduced a style of romance that refused to face realities and persisted in following fancies. To Visakhadatta and Bhavabhuti drama was essentially a social study, a presentation of the ways of the world—of *lokacarita.* So we find Visakhadatta writing against a historical background while Bhavabhuti takes most of his plots from the epic Ramayana since it conformed, more than the Mahabharata, to the Hindu type of family, and other social institutions. It is true their stories are old but entirely new is the way in which they are told.[1] Drama, with these two writers, is once again a presentation of life as they saw and of the life that they saw. It is for this reason that the Canakya in the MR. is not the traditional Gapakya, a self-seeking adventurer. In the play he is a constructive statesman whose one ambition is to place his country under a strong and uniform central authority. Visakhadatta, a member of the ruling class, had not lived in vain at a time when his country was divided under petty and narrow-minded princes whose one business was to fight with the neighbour. " This country did never feel secure as long as the Nandas were ruling. Now it has been united under one sovereignty "—these words of Canakya (1-22) are a cry from the poet's heart. In the very last verse of the play the author notes with agony his country preyed upon by the foreign-

ers (mlecchair udvejyamana).[1] "Let me not lose my intellectual powers which, to achieve an object, are far more efficacious than hosts of armies" (I. 26). In this sentiment of Capakya the dramatist is asking for a sound statesman in preference to a sound killer, otherwise known as a great conqueror or warrior. These warrior-kings with their hosts of armies, emulating the code of another time, had done their worst by fights and factions. Times are changed now. The rule of the country must be reflected not in the gory sword bat in the feeling intellect of the ruler. Even the old rule that a Brahmin should counsel and a Ksatriya should fight is no longer relevant The professional Brahmin Caoakya is throughout the play earnestly seeking to win over Amatya Raksasa before making him the king's minister. In the very first speech Oanakya makes it clear, (ata eva asmakam tvatsarmgrahane yatnah).) "That is why we are trying to win you over."

Far bolder than those of ViSakhadatta are the changes and the adaptations that Bhavabhuti introduced in the episodes he selected from the epic. Of his three plays, two viz., the Mahavira-Carita and the Uttara Rama-Carita are based on the Rama story. Between themselves the two plays cover the life-story of Rama from his education and marriage upto his second re-union with Sita. (It roughly extends over 26 years, 14 in the Mahja. and 12 in the U.R). The poet's object is evident throughout. He attempts to interpret the life and actions of Rama—unavoidably in the light of his own society and surroundings. The struggle between Rama and Ravana —the core of the epic story—is a fight for supremacy as Bhavabhuti sees it in the Mahav5ra-Carita. Rama as an ideal king is compelled to challenge Ravana, a powerful tyrant. The raksasas of the play are not the fantastic evil spirits of mythology. They are, one and all, well-behaved, human and reasonable in a way. Thus Malyavan, the uncle of Ravana, is planning to get ParaSurama, a Brahmin and an inveterate hater of ksatriyas, against Rama. Here, as well as in Act IV, Malyavan is a statesman who has a policy and a diplomacy. When the defeated Parasirama retires into the forest leaving the Dandaka territory under Rama's supervision, Malyavan des-

1. This sentiment would not be as true of the times of Canakya as of after the downfall of the Mauryan (but more especially of the Gupta) Empire, The author thus refers more probably to contemporary condition*

patches Surpanakha disguised as Manthana, the hump-backed maid of Kaikeyi. Surpanakha goes to Mithila and asks DaSaratha for two boons he had promised to his favourite queen Kaikeyi; one, that Bharata should be crowned heir-apparent to the throne; two, that Rama should go in exile for 14 years with Sita and Laksmana. In the epic the above episode takes place in the palace' of Ayodhyia where Manthara instigates and then Kaikeyi asks. Bhavabhiiti, however, has laid the scene at Mithila and has entirely exonerated Kaikeyi from the sordid piece of cruelty and hatred by making Malyavan and (Surpanakha responsible for the whole affair.

The episode of Rama's marriage too is described in an original way. Rama and Lakesmana led by ViSvamitra arrive at Mithila where Janaka's brother • accompanied by Slta and urmila. receives them. Rama and Sita fall in love at first sight. The marriage is practically settled. The ordeal of breaking Siva's bow in twain is then gone through, as if formally. As a matter of fact, the breaking of this bow is made significant from an entirely different point of view (though in the epic it is a necessary preliminary to the marriage). Parasurama, a powerful Brahmin, feels personally humiliated and challenged since Siva is his tutor. In Acts II and III the poet analyses the character of Parasurama in a masterly way. Should the Brahmins degrade themselves by taking, as Para§urama did, to the cruel profession of fighting ? Was Parasurama justified in his efforts to exterminate the Ksatriya race? Parasuriama himself answered these questions after his defeat and humiliation in Act IV. " It was not in the least wise of me to behave as I did. My name and fame and family have been sullied by me alone. I had many faults in me; and yet you forgave me with a Brahmin's kindness. I have been defeated for my own arrogance and for my own good." (IV 22). Bhavabhiiti himself was a good Brahmin of the South, which only shows that he was a better dramatist.

In being a better dramatist Bhavabhuti has a claim more to our sympathy than to our admiration. Like all original thinkers and great artists, he seems to have been misunderstood, even ridiculed by his contemporaries. Literature and art are the only phases of life where democracy is a positive curse. The contemporaries of Bhava bhuti had their own ideals about drama—like the muddled-headed middle-class of all ages. Moreover, plays like those of king Sri Harsa had convinced them in their belief that drama, at its best, was a luxury and a pleasantry. Love to them was mere lasciviousnes.

When a ViSakhadatiai writes about a prosaic Brahmin and when a Bhavabhati writes like a prosaic Brahmin where is drama going to ? —they asked half in contempt and half in humiliation. Worse than that. Bhavabhutis manner is positively insulting when he writes of love as,

advaitam sukhia-duhkhayor anugunam sarvasu avasthasu yad
visriamo hrdayasya yatra jarasa yasminn aharyo rasah
kalena avarajgtatyayat parinate yat snehasare sthitam
bhadram prema sumianusasya katham apy ekam hi tat prapyate.

" Uniform in happiness and misery, equable in all conditions, the content of heart where feeling intensifies with age, and as time goes by ripens into friendship; such is love. Lucky is the man who for once is destined for such love." (U.R. 1-39) No wonder that the populace turned down Bhavabhuti's plays and philosophy; and no wonder, too, that Bhavabhuti, in one of his most wretched moods,, cursed it in such dignified accents :

ye nama kecid iha nah prathayanty avajifiiam
    jananti te kirh-api tan prati na esa yatnah
utpatsyate mama tu ko 'pi samiana-dharma
    kialo hy ayam niravadhir vipula ca prthvi

" There are some who (TRY TO) treat us with contempt. Well,, our plays are not meant for them. What do they know (of drama)? There shall be born one (intellectually) our equal. There *shall* be for, Time is endless and Earth a vast place" (MM. 1-8). Small consolation indeed for so great a writer! In fact, the whole of Malati-Madhava seems to have been written in this mood. The play differs from the other two only in the fact of not being drawn from a mythological source; otherwise, the same richness of thought, the same powerful treatment, the same high thinking and accurate analysis obtain here as in the other two plays.

Malati-MSdhava is a play that centres round a love-affair. Unlike in the earlier love-plays the hero and the heroine in the MM. belong to non-princely families. Secondly, the hero and the heroine are both young and suited! to each other while in earlier plays the hero, usually a king, is already a mature and married man of experience and the heroine a girl from about 16 to 18 and, of course, never married before. Throughout Act I, the dramatist is pointing out that a genuine love-story is a most natural thing (I 16, 18, 20,.

23, 27 and 35). He insists on this point because the love of a king and a princess in the Hai$a type of plays is, according to him, like the love between the circus manager and the animal in the cage. The princess heroine is always confined to the four walls of the palace —especially that part of the palace which is within an easy reach from the harem. Madhava and Malati, however, are free enough to mix with the outside world; and even in this wider world, both have found each other and have also found out that each could not live without the other. In spite of this spontaneous and mutual call, the lovers could not be brought together owing to the prevailing social conditions and conventions ; nor is there any court-fool of a Vidu§aka as in love-stories of kings, to arrange clandestine meeting. Bhavabhuti could never tolerate the traditional, standardised fool to walk in the noble avenues of love. He has introduced a Buddhist nun—Klamaaxlaki by name—who, to superficial observers, appears as a go-between. When her disciple wonders why Kamandaki who has renounced the worldly ties should interest herself in a love-intrigue the latter replies that it is only on account of her love for her friend Bhuivasu, Malati father (1-12) and secondly, because the mutual love of Madhava and Malati is an open secret. Under such circumstances, she adds, it is just a credit to those who would bring about the marriage (I 16). Kamandald is a lady of great experience and learning and of a healthy outlook. "The only important and auspicious circumstance for a marriage is mutual love " (itaretanurago hi viviaha-karmani panardhyam II p. 59). Thus she speaks to her disciple Avalokita. To Malati herself she narrates the storie9 of Sakuntalla and others suggesting that even in the sacred past decent girls have been bold enough—against all difficulties—to marry only those they loved (III 3). Thus training the lovers in their responsibilities, guiding them along a straight-forward path and arranging meetings between them so that they could know and understand each other more closely; Kamandaki makes bold to marry them at the time when Malati, as the bride-to-be of Nandana, comes in bridal procession to the temple. " To a wife her husband is a lover, a friend, all her relations, all her desires, her treasure, nay, her very life ; to a husband, his wife is his rightful consort. Remember this, my dears " (VI 18) is her advice to the young lovers as they are being married in haste and secret. The story of Madhava and Malati ends with Act VI. In Act VII Makaranda—Madhava's friend—has returned to the procession disguised as Malati and is

married to Nandana. The boy-Malati did not take long to give a good shaking to Nandana. Madayantika, the sister of the bride-groom and Malatis friend and the beloved of Makaranda comes to pacify her friend and sister-in-law and not till she embraces the latter does she find that her sister-in-law is really her lover. Madayantika compliments her friend by eloping with Makaranda. The story in the last three Acts is in spite of some of the best poetry in them, an unnecessary tag. In Act VIII one Kapalakundala carries away Malati in order to humiliate Madhava who had killed her preceptor Aghoraghaarta. Act IX is only a lyrical imitation of Meghaduta ; and the last Act where the elders set the seal of approval on the conduct of Madhava and Makaranda is more conventional than artistic. It is greatly interesting to note that the commentary of Tripurari is available only upto first seven Acts though in his commentary on I 5 he seems to refer to Act VIII.[2]

Though Bhavabhuti seems to have written the play for an average audience there is no compromise with his artistic conceptions. He has treated love from a higher point of view. He has introduced a world of realities. Act V is a terrible scene laid in a temple in the crematorium. Act VI is the temple in the town. If in Act V Malati is to be sacrificed by Kapalakundala, in act VI she is to be sacrificed by her own people. It is a clever trick on the part of the poet to place the two temples side by side and challenge his audience. Act VII represents a bed-room ; Act VIII is by the side of a pond.

In basing their plays thus closely on contemporary life both Visakhadatta and Bhavabhuti have adopted a new style and a new technique. The lengthy soliloquies of canakya (MR. I) and Raksasa (MR. II), Madhava's narration of how he fell in love at first sight (MM. Ill), Lavangika's description of Malatis state of mind (MM. Ill) are some of the best illustrations. The authors are more justified in this since they introduce fine dramatic dialogues. The scene of the feigned quarrel between canakya and Candragupta (MR. Ill), the meeting of Rama and Parasursma (Maha. II), the quarrel between Parasurama and the sages (Maha. Ill), the fight of

2. bhadram bhadram iti Malati-Madayantika-pmpti-rupam mangala-dvayam sucitam. Bhuyase mangalaya iti Kapalakuindala-grhita-malati vipanna-nistarahlm araksagrhita -madhava-makaranda-prenma-raksadayan sucyante.

Madhava and Aghoraghata (MM. V), Rama's talk with Vasanti (U. R. Ill)—in such scenes the dramatists have shown a great skill in weaving a dialogue in pithy and powerful prose. The plays of sri Harsa present a poor contrast in this respect. As has been already shown Sri Harsa was more a" poet of imagination and description than a dramatist of insight, observation and analysis. His plays are lyrics first and stories at the best. Visakhadatta, on the other hand, has subordinated—even suppressed oftentimes—pure fanciful poetry to genuine dramatic value. Only cnce (MR. Ill) do we find a long, lyrical passage but then the Kaumudi festival is to be celebrated. Similarly, Bhavabhuti describes Dandaka and Pancavati (U. R. II and III) and it is appropriate since those sights are reviving memories painful to Rama and helpful to the development of the play. The crematorium (MM. V) is described at length for the probable reason that it could not be represented on the stage.

Far more important than either the prose style or the presentation of the contemporary life or even the high tone of accurate and economical observation and analysis is the new technique evolved by these two dramatists and to that we shall now turn.

CHAPTER XVTII

THE NEW TOUCH

The success or otherwise of a drama which, as Kalidasa has said, is prayoga-pradhaana, i.e. mainly to be represented on the stage, depends on the success or otherwise of the illusion of the audience. With the modern stage and the elaborate facilities for its setting (not, of course, in India) it is much easier for the producer and the actors to make the audience live and move in the very atmosphere of the play. Nevertheless, a good dramatist, with or without such facilities, is able to create that atmosphere by his artistic ability. For one thing, a good dramatist, when and as long as he writes his play, is himself living the days and thoughts and actions of his characters. In all seriousness and with great significance Bhavabhuti's Sutradhara in the U. R. says :

esosmi, bhob, kavivasat karyavasac ca
ayodhikas tadanintanas ca saimvrttah

" Here I turn into a citizen of Ayodhya of Rama's days, since the poet and the plot require me to."

Mere directions or descriptions, however, are not enough to create and sustain such an illusion on the part of an audience. The power of the dramatist which does create and sustain such an illusion is the ' dramatic touch Sometimes it is the background, sometimes the description, and sometimes the scene or the sentiment or the characterization that creates such an illusion. The entrance and the opening speech of canakya, for example, in MR. I is a case where a scene helps to create the illusion. The Sutradhara in the Prologue is speaking of the eclipse of the moon. The way he expresses it there is a pun on the word *candra*— moon and *graham* —' eclipse' or " capturing' (I. 6). Suddenly from behind the curtain pours the thundering voice of Canakya ' who dares to lay his hands on Chandragupta as long as I am alive ?' (lah ka eaa mayi sthite chandraguptam abhibhavitum icchati). It is the suddenness that wakes the audience into a new atmosphere and by the time canjakya enters and talks in detail about his policy and actions we have so far forgotten the Sutradhara and formed a new and intimate ac~

quaintance with this diplomat that we listen, with a sense of self-importance, to the secrets of his policy. Before this illusion would be lost a spy of Canakya enters as a gypsy showing round the pictorial charts of Yama and his world. In other words, the scene is such that we would never feel aloof from it and by the time Act I is over we are involved in such an interesting and intricate cob-web of plots and policies that we decide to go through the experience.[1] In Act II Raksasa is introduced ; his spy enters; and, poor Rakdasa, he has forgotten all about his own spy and cannot even recognise him ! With our experience of the astuteness and of the admirable coolness of Canakya in Act I we cannot but pity the poor Raksasa. Thus as the play proceeds we are more and more taken into its atmosphere, feeling and suffering and thinking and acting with its characters so that when we rise we are refreshed as if from a healthy sort of exercise.

A most elegant example in this respect is the Uttara-Rama-carita of Bhavabhuti. Herein we find both the skill of the head and the touch of the hand. The story in the U. R. is too well-known from the <pic to be introduced. In the Maha., on the other hand, though based on the same popular story, the Actor asks the Manager in the Prologue what part of the story is to be dramatized since such a venture (viz., a dramatic version of the epic Ramayana) is so unusual.[2] (kim tu apurvatvat prabandhasya kathia-pradesam samararhbhe Srotum icchanti, p. 9.) In the U. R. from the title itself we know that Rama's later life is to be depicted. It is Rama-carita—the story of Rama and Rama alone. That the dramatist should succeed, as ultimately he did in throwing such popular characters as Sita and Laksmaina in the background is a marvel of his art. How is it done? Before we answer this question we shall try to understand the story as the dramatist has presented it. After all, the success or otherwise depends on how far the achievement accords to the intention.

In the first place, we should remember that the poet wants to Interpret and not to narrate the life of Rama. To a Hindu whose family-institution is ruled by the father and embraces his own as well as his father's brothers the character of Rama is ideally admir-

1. This statement can be verified by imagining the entrance of Canakya in any other way; the pun is as sudden and as suggestive.

2. Since the days of Bhasa there were practically no plays based on the epic stories (to be distinguished from the stories in the epics). Even with Bhasa the Mahabharata was more popular than the RSmayaaja.

able; to a Hindu who, from times immemorial, has been legally allowed to marry as many wives as he likes, the fact that Rama—a prince—should live with and love only one wife is a marvel; that Rama should suffer and struggle for others is an inspiration indeed. It is not then surprising that a poet, a man with vision and feelings, should strive to understand and analyse and interpret such an ideal character. How is it possible that Rama could cast off his wife whom he loved and knew to be chaste on a petty pretext that the irresponsible mob had raised a scandal against her? Kalidasa treated this intriguing problem in his Raghuvamsa (cantos XIV-XV) but Bhavabhuti was bolder enough to do the same in a drama which is known as drsya kavya i.e. poem to be seen.

Bhavabhuti has set about his task through a thorough analysis of the characters. From the original epic he has borrowed just the fact that Rama abandoned Sita and then, all on his own, he has constructed a fine background and a series of avenues so that our approach to the problem be the easier. In Act I, Rama is the happiest young man to begin with. His enemies are all killed or defeated ; his exile is over and safe; and his wife is bearing his issue. His one ambition now is to be a successful ruler.

sneham dayam ca saukhyam ca yadi va janakim api
aradhanaya lokasya muncato nasti me vyatha (1-12).

" I want to serve my subjects and please them. For that (if necessary) I would give up, with no grievance, love and compassion and happiness—nay, even my beloved Sita I would give up."

Of course, nobody takes the remark seriously except in its sort of mathematical suggestion that Sita is more than any happiness to him. Many another young man, in these circumstances, would rise to the same eloquence of heart. But before the act is over,, *Rama does abandon Sita!* This is carrying one's ideals too far, we shake our head in mild disapproval. Is Rama, because of his prosaic sense of duty, turned so hard-hearted ? Is Rama so unchivalrous as to throw his pregnant wife helpless in the midst of wild forests ? Is Rama so sensitive to a fair name ? So scared of his subjects ? Such are our thoughts when we feel determined to understand the strange ways of this man.

Bhavabhuti himself has taken care that our view6—the views of average mind—are well and truly represented. As soon as Rama

decides to abandon Sita, Durmukha—the spy—comes out, as an official, with a contempt for the rabble.

> katham, agni-parisuddhayah garbha-sthita-pavitra-santiailayalb devyahi durjana-*vaccanad* idam vyavasthitam devena.

"Our Queen has gone through the fire (ordeal) and proved her faith ; she bears in her womb a holy offspring ; my lord, what are you doing by believing in foul-mouthed rascals?" (I).

" May heavens protect thee if thou thinkest my subjects wicked ! How could they believe in the fire-ordeal that took place at such a distance ?" moans Rama. What a noble attempt to understand others' point of view ! But is there no other way of convincing the people except this extreme cruelty of casting her off? So kind and sympathetic to his citizens, how could Rama be so unkind to his own wife in a delicate condition? Strange are the ways of these great men, we exclaim with Vasanti in Act II. " Harder than diamond yet more tender than[1] a flower is the heart of the great. Who can understand it?" (II. 7) In order to maintain the name and fame of his family Rama became so hard-hearted. Is this self-sacrifice? We doubt it again with Vasanti who says, "Oh, you are hard-hearted! Do you think your fame that you place higher than all is (now) unsullied ? What is more disgraceful, more infamous than throwing a helpless woman into a dreadful danger?" (III. 27) It is not merely the outsiders that condemn Rama. Even his own father-in-law, Janaka, known to tradition as a great philosopher, condemns him in Act IV. " Oh, the heartlessness of the citizens ! The thoughtlessness of Rama ! I am boiling with rage at this iniquity. There is only one way in which I could be satisfied and that is either by an arrow (i.e. killing Rama) or by a curse." (IV. 25) The people .nearer at home, too, are not at all pleased if not actually displeased with Rama's action. "The very seed of all our desires has been first removed by Fate; when the plant is cut off how could there be a flower ? " says Sumantra—the old charioteer—who has seen three generations of Rama's family. " When the eldest of the family has no issue where is the greatness or the continuity ? With this thought our elders are greatly disturbed." Says Chandraketu, Laksmana's son (V. 25). This is more a technical than an ethical condemnation of Rama. Even Lava and Kusa—Rama's own sons but as yet unidentified—punish Rama by pitying him. " Without his

Sita could Rama be anything but miserable ? " is the comment of Kusi, the elder of the twins. (VI. 30). In the last Act, Mother Earth too is angry. When Sita says " oh, my lord, my husband" Earth turns angrily on her daughter and shouts with bitterness " who is your lord, your husband ? "

Thus does Bhavabhuti represent criticisms and condemnations of all shades. It is natural, he argues, that none could understand, much less sympathise with Rama. In his own analysis of Rama, he tells us that to say Rama is great or cruel or thoughtless etc. is not to understand the problem at all. Rama, as Bhavabhuti sees him, is human to the very marrow of his bones. "Who could purify my Sita who is pure from her very birth ? Fire and holy water need no purification " (I. 13), says Rama before he has heard of the scandal; and after he comes to know it, he curses himself as a cruel, wicked man not deserving Sita who is sleeping (at the moment) on his laps. Slowly he gets up. In words, he decides to send her away ; in action, he himself is running away—but not before he falls at her feet and cries "For the last time let your lotus-feet touch Rama's head." And then—he b~u-r-s-t-s into s-o-b-s! He still loves her! The course of true love always runs smooth, i.e. unperturbed by such external or material considerations. The love that unites two hearts has its own purpose to achieve viz., to take those two hearts to a vaster world of vital feelings; to turn the individual from the human speck he is to a divine spark enlivening all it comes in contact with." "Children are the (holy) tie that brings two loving hearts to a world of joy" (III. 17). Great or small, that is the noble purpose to which a loving heart is raised. So, it is no weakness on Rama's part when he breaks out saying "I am alone, I am helpless in this forest; I will cry out to my heart's fill. Citizens of mine that are in Ayodhya, will you excuse me for once?" (III. 32). "This inner emotion, this affectionate tie of children is universal" says the Ganges when even Mother Earth turns her maternal look to her daughter. What he says in Act III Bhavabhuti makes Valmiki say in Act VII in the latter's (imaginary) dramatisation of the epic. We know for certain that Valmiki never dramatized his Ramayana. Kalidasa tells us that Kusa and Lava recited the epic in Rama's presence. (Raghu. XV. 63). This not the only innovation of BhavabhQti. To convey the effect he wants, he has not only introduced a new situation but an entirely new atmosphere in which the audience enters from the very beginning and, with the knowledge it

already has of the epic story, enjoys these fresh excursions into the world of noble feelings.

As the play opens, the Sutradhara tells us that it is the festival of Rama's coronation; and yet he wonders why the officers and the royal servants are, one andall, so quiet! How is it that the city, instead of being gay at the festivity, is all glum and gloomy ? The public squares are absolutely deserted ! We too soon begin to wonder what is wrong. Perhaps, as we know the story, we fear that Sita has been already abandoned. Our fears are set at rest by the Actor's information that all the visitors have left Ayodhya. Rama's mothers too have left under Vasistha's escort, for Rsyasrnga's hermitage where sacrificial sessions lasting for 12 years, are to be •started. What a pity that Rama, after his happy return, should not be able to enjoy the company of his people—for possibly another 12 years. The greater the pity since Sita is with child. It is only now that Rama, proud and flushed, would need the help and advice and that Sita the sympathy and care of the elders. No wonder then that there are no festivities in the town. The new king might be feeling suddenly deserted and dejected. So the manager (Sutradhara) decides to go to the palace perhaps with *an* idea of entertaining the Icing (sva-ja&ti-samayena, 'as suits the etiquette of our profession'). The Actor says that they will have to be very careful in their use of words (since Rama is so dejected). "You cannot be too careful either of words or of woman", says the Manager, " people *will* misunderstand or misinterpret them." "That reminds me," whispers the Actor, " do you know our people are talking scandal even against Sita on account of her stay in Lanka ? They don't believe the fire-ordeal ! " We are one with the Sutradhara who says " God help us that this scandal doesn't find its way to Rama !" What a tragedy it would be at this time when his only companion is Sita, when he is proud she is going to bear him issue! With this knowledge and suggestion we are prepared, as the main scene opens, to sympathise with Rama, universally deserted so to say ; and we pity Sita for her innocence.

As the main scene proceeds we feel as if we are in a maze of gloom. Irony mocks us at every step and as we look back we find no one there and so we feel lonelier still. Against the background of Sutradhara's suggestion, the attempts of Rama and Sita to cheer each other convey a sinister impression to our mind. "Separation from relatives is always distressing," says Sita, and Rama, just to cheer

her, agrees cheerfully to what she says. *' Separation from relatives—" ! We shudder. What would Sita feel when, as we know, she is to be separated from her husband ? However, like a ray of sun-shine in a dark room comes the sage Astavakra from rsyasrnga's hermitage. With childish petulance Sita wants to know if people still remember her there. Not only they remembered her but Vasistha had sent a message specially for her. " The Universal Mother is your mother ; Janaka, as great as god Prajapati, is your father; you are the daughter-in-law of that family (royal) of which Sun and myself are the preceptors. What else shall we desire for you? Be a mother of heroes." (1-9). What a consolation for a married woman ! Should she only look up to her parents, her father-in-law or her sons? Why did not Vasistha tell her that she was the only and beloved queen of one of the greatest kings.[3] It is an ominous omission! and an omission that is cruelly suggestive to an audience knowing the story. Just as we are sadly thinking over it,. Rama, in reply to Vasistha's message that the interests of the subjects are the only interests of a king, bursts out heroically that to please his) subjects he would even abandon his beloved Sita (1-12). Our fear grows a bit worse—and we are relieved at the entrance of Laksmana with the paintings of some of the episodes during their exile. " How far has the painter covered our exile " ? asks Rama. " As far as the incident of Sita's purification through the fire-ordeal" is Laksmana's reply. Heavens forbid, we cry with Rama, is there any purification for Sita who is pure from her very birth? (1-13). And yet the play ironically suggests some such scandal from the very beginning. It could not be helped. This stigma (of having stayed in Ravana's city) will stick to Sita throughout her life (esa te jivitiavadhih pravadah). The joyful interlude disappears as quickly as a tropical twilight. As the three go on viewing the paintings an atmosphere of ' old-age-ish' mournful remembrances returns. The more they look at the views the more they feel the joys of days *gone by,* the sadder they feel for their present state till Rama could contain no longer. " I feel as if I am living in those days in which I held in marriage your hand that was joy incarnate so to say " he

3. Cf. Raghu. XIV-74 where Kalidasa makes Valmiki welcome the abandoned Sita in these words : " Your famous father-in-law is my friend ; your father who is the best guide and philosopher of the good (is also my friend); you yourself are at the fore-front of faithful wives. Why should I not be then compassionate to you ? " No word again of Rama !

says to Sita (1-18). " Gone are the days when our father was living, when I was newly wed and when our mothers used to look after us." (1-19). Why, even the days of exile were happy ! " Do you remember, my dear, the time when Laksmana used to look after us ? Do you remember how we used to enjoy ourselves on the beautiful banks of Godavari ? Do you remember how cheek-to-cheek and arm-in-arm we used to talk away the whole night? Do you remem—" (1-27). Poor Rama ! the heart that yearns for the past has surely its reasons to rue the present. The more they think of the past, the wider is the gulf between the happy past and the miserable present. They feel like children lost in the wilderness whiling away their fears by thinking of mother's arms; like lonely wanderers lost in a stormy night. Sita shudders. "The gloom has so covered me up that I feel as if I am again separated from my husband" (aham api ati-bhumiim gatena rainarainakena larya-putra-sunyam iva atmanam pasyami. p. 33). It *does* get unbearable. The misery is not only revived but intensified so much so that Rama cries out " Stop, Laksmana, I feel as if I am once again separated from my Sitta " (1-33). Feels as if ! Once again we see the approaching shadow of the calamity. The tragedy consists in the fact that while we feel and see and know it Rama is ignorant and unbelieving. Husband and wife are once again left to themselves. They breathe freely and close to one another. Sita is exhausted. " Ever rely on me, I shall make you happy. What ? Looking for a pillow ? Poor dear, here's Rama's arm. That's your pillow and that's your privilege, yours and yours alone." (1-37). There Sita falls asleep in a minute. On Rama's arm ! How ironically symbolic ! The arm that won her love, the arm that promised her protection and the same arm, as we know in the story, that is going to cast her away ! Rama himself recognises this irony later on in Act II where he) is to kill a :Sudra for being a Sudra and practising penance at the same time. " You are the hand of that Raama " he coaxes hi9 trembling hand, " of that Rama who was cruel enough to send into exile his Sita who was in a delicate condition." (11-10). For the present, he is ignorant of what is coming. He is lovingly looking into the soft, innocent, beautiful eyes of Sita. sleeping on his arm. At last! he says, I *am* happy. Such love as ours comes once in a while and lucky is the man to whom it does (1-39). That Rama should say this while the spy with the terrible news of the scandal on his lips is actually standing at the door is indeed the limit of the cold, calculating cruelty of the Fates.

Lest the dull-witted might miss this cruelty the author has used a device (technically known as pataka-sthana) where the last word used by Rama viz., virahah, 'separation/ is syntactically connected with the first word viz., upasthitah ('arrival') announcing the spy. C Separation has arrived' is the complete sentence-idea.) The effect is as cruel as waking a man from sleep and then stabbing him. The shadow that was looming so large is now too near and Rama, feeling uncomfortable from the very beginning, bursts out. The poet is too artistic to leave at that. As Sita gets on the chariot which she thinks is taking her for a pleasure-trip (and which we know is going to cast her away) she asks the charioteer to be careful since something stirs within her (sphurati me garbha-bhlarafr, my womb throbs). Finally, not realising the unkindness that is visited'on her, she salutes in all innocence the deities of Rama's family (namo raghu-kula-devatabhyah). Lucky for these deities that the curtain drops immediately.

We have dealt with the touch' in the first Act since it sets the problem before us as the dramatist wants us to see it. There are other situations introduced, as for example, Rama's coming to Pancavati (II), Sita's arrival there under Tamasa's protection and the divine arrangement of Sita not being perceived by anyone else (III), the meeting of Rama with Lava and Kusa who, he has a psychological presentiment, are probably his sons (VI) : in such situations which the dramatist brings in as illustrations there is a presentation, an interpretation or an ' atmosphere.' By such scenes which are as if intimately known to us we are taken to the world of the characters themselves. Thus in Act III is the episode of an elephant that twelve years ago was Sita's pet. He is known as the adopted son of Sita. "Oh, how my child has grown ! " says Sitia. Rama (who, of course, is unaware of Sita though she can hear and see him) talks, as if, to Sita, " You are lucky, my dear, since your child is now grown to a marriageable age." Sita is now a mother—suffering motherhood incarnate—when she says, "let my son be not separated from his beloved." Every father and every mother at every home at any time has the same sentiments; so the audience is at once intimate with the characters and the situation. Sita laughs through her tears as she confesses to her friend Tamasa "look, my motherly milk is flowing." There's my child and there's his father and being so near them I feel, for a moment, as if I am a lady of the house " (samsarini iva sarhvitt). It is in this new atmosphere of mature love and its

responsibilities that we are asked to see and judge Rama and Sita. Rama may be a very foolish husband, but surely he is a good father. And what man is not great who has a feeling heart? "There is only one sentiment, the sentiment of feeling. It assumes different forms of expression according to the difference in circumstances; just as water, called an eddy or a bubble or a wave, is water in essence." In this last verse of Act III Bhavabhuti has given us a beautiful definition of tragedy. Aristotle's idea of catharsis, of evoking emotions in the audience, is seen here with a better insight. Feelings must be noble if they are to be interpreted by a great artist; the artist must be great if he is to analyse and interpret the world of feelings. Bhavabhuti has done it in a masterly way and let us say with Tamas5 (at the end of Act III).

aho samvidhanakam, 'What a grand piece of Art!' Drama is the mirror of the ways of Man.

CHAPTER XIX

EPICS AND SANSKRIT DRAMA

In the final stages of the development of the Sanskrit drama the most noteworthy feature is the influence of the two epics-more especially as source of the story-plots of the later dramas. With plays like those of Bhavabhuti, we definitely see the best and the last. Though it could be expected that many a drama was written after the age of Bhavabhuti, it could be said with as much certainty that plays in Sanskrit not only ceased' to be the fashion but also ceased to be standard plays. In a later place, we shall see the causes that led finally to the decay of the Sanskrit drama. Here it is enough to note that in the post-Bhavabhuti period Sanskrit plays continued just enough to exhibit the symptoms of decadence and deterioration. However, as suggested above, the one thing to strike even a casual observer was the influence of the epics, Riamayaioa and Mahaabharata. Murari, a dramatist in the middle of the 9th century, rightly observes :—

aho sakala-kavi sartha-sadharani khalu iyam Valmikiya subhasitianivi.

" How this good composition of Valmiki has become the joint-stock capital for all writers-merchants ? "

Even from the earliest days, as a matter of fact, we could see that the epics were an inspiration to Sanskrit dramatists. In the plays ascribed to Bhasa, we have one-act plays based on the episodes from Mahabharata while Balacharita, Abhiseka, and Pratimla are based on the Rama-story. Later we find Bhavabhuti writing two plays, Mahaviracarita and Uttararamacarita, based on the same story. What is further striking is the fact that both the dramatists, within the compass of their respective plays, narrate the complete story of the Ramayana—including the first and later (interpolated) sections of the epic. Secondly, as already suggested, Bhasa and Bhavabhuti have shown their greatness by daring to introduce changes in and interpretations! of the story as handed down by the epic tradition. As a matter of fact, between Bhasa and Bhavabhuti, on the one hand, and later writers of Rima-plays on the

other, the difference that we find is exactly the story of the deterioration of the dramatic art in Sanskrit literature. Bhasa and Bhavabhuti, have dramatised the episodes from the Ramayana while later dramatists—we shall have to call them so, at least by courtesy —have simply narrated, rewritten the Rama-story in the *campu* style and within Purainic atmosphere.

As examples of this later style, let us look at the three plays (1) *Kundarnala* by Dinniaga, (2.) *Anargha-Raghava* by Murari and *Prasanna-Raghava* by Jayadeva. The first, K. M., belongs to a period, as could be seen from a closer comparison, immediately after Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti,; the A. R., as already mentioned, belongs to the ninth century A.D- ; and the third, the Pras. R., is as late as the third, quarter of the fifteenth century A.D. Of these three, the K.M.deals with the latter part of Rama's story, beginning, where Act I of Bhavabhuti's U.R. ends, with Laksmana leading Sita to the forest before abandoning her. In Act 1, the abandoned queen of Rama, is reported to Valmiki by his pupils and Valmiki, making use of his *yogacaksus* now, finds Sita innocent and therefore decides to take her to his Ashrama. In the *pravesaka* of the next Act (which takes us to a period of eight to ten years after Act I) the birth of Sita's twins (who are now studying Ramayana—abalau sairi-vrttau—they have ceased to be children) is reported and it is also mentioned that Rama, initiating the performance of a sacrifice at Naimisa, has sent a messenger to invite Valmlki. It is very strange that important episodes are thus casually disposed off while the main scene is taken up by a dialogue between Sita and Vedavata wherein all that Sita says is that she loves Rama and knows that Rama loves her. In Act III Sita, her two sons (though they themselves do not know that she is their mother) and also Rama and Laksmana have all assembled in the Naimisa forest. The main •scene is the title scene wherein as Rama is wandering with his brother the *kundarnala,* wreath of Kunda flowers woven by Sita, is carried by the breeze and drops at Rama's feet who immediately recognises the design of Sita's hands. The two brothers, now like two detectives, follow up the clues till they see female foot-prints on which they conclude that Sitia must be there. What is still more ridiculous, Rama is keen to find out where Sita, a wife abandoned years ago, stays. In Act IV, the interlude tells us of an intended recitation-show of Ramayana in which Tilottama is to play the role of Sita. We are also informed that Valmaki has

a pond in and around which women-folk could not be seen by men. So in the main scene Rama is somehow dragged by the dramatist to this pond where Sita also comes. S5tS could see her husband though, owing to Valmiki's yogic stage-setting so to say, Rama could not see Sita. Only in one respect the dramatist has shown his imaginative skill. Though the actual Sita could not be seen,, her image in the waters could be seen by Rama. However, when later on, the Viduisaka tells Rama that Tilottama is to play Sita's role, poor Rama thinks to his chagrin that the image he saw must have been that of Tilottama in Sita's role. The last two Acts just describe the recitation of Ramayana by Lava and Kusa. who, at the end, are revealed to Rama as his own sons. At the end Sita has to go through the ordeal to prove her innocence. That done, Rama accepts his wife, Kusa is crowned as King and Lava as the heir-apparent.

As we read the play we are not struck so much by any greatness of the dramatist as we are reminded of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti. The more we read the play the more we feel that some-youngish admirer of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti has tried to make a play by putting together different pieces from the works of those two dramatists. The main scene in the very first act opens like that in ASak. with a similar description of the moving chariot. Sita's speech in Act I reminds us of Kialidasa's verse in Raghuvams]a in the same context. (Raghu. XIV-65) Throughout the play Dinnaga's verses betray a very strong influence of the poetry of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti. What is more interesting is the presence of a Viduisaka friend of Rama. This Viduisaka is attempted to be created in the very image of the Viduisaka in the Aisak. Like Kalidasa's Dusyanta Dinnlaga's Rama asks his Viduisaka in Act V.

Rama :—If you think Sitia worthy enough to be still remembered why did you not prevent me when I decided to abandon her ? Throughout the play the shadow of Bhavabhuti's masterpiece, the U. R., is clearly discernible. Phrases, sentences, lines of verses, stage-devices—there is no aspect of the dramatic art where the stern southern Brahmin has not held Dinnaga bound in awe and admiration. And even the Dinnaga does not claim our admiration. Valmiki who is a poet and an artist to Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti is just a tradition-bound orthodox-minded elderly priest *in* Kundamaia. Sita who has her own individuality in RaghuvamSa and Uttararamacarita is, to Dinnaga, no more than a conventional

housewife. Drama, instead of an art of the stage, is a dialogue-book of the class-room. The story of Ramayan]a appeals to Din-nagft not for its dramatic qualities but for its moral lesson.

Anargha-Raghava of Murari, on the other hand, is a more ambitious play. Within seven acts it covers the entire story of Ramayana. As in K.M., here also there is more poetry to describe the conventional time, day, season, and other objects than is relevant in a drama. The drama is almost a poetic composition with 367 verses. In the Vi§kambhaka of Act II, for example, six verses describe dawn, four more describe the morning and then in the main scene Rama and Laksmana recite 14 verses to describe Visvamitra's hermitage. In the last act where victorious Rama is returning to Ayodhya seated in the *puspaka* plane, Rama, pointing to the earth below as the plane flies, describes the various countries, rivers, mountains etc. ; he even talks of the *Vaidarbhi* style in poetry. And then his ' asides' to Sita, where he mostly talks about *viparita-rati, puruayita* etc., are sheer abominations. The play is one of the best examples of the degradation to which Sanskrit language and the art of drama had sunk. When at the end (VII-146), he talks of his drama as a poem (kavita) and says that it would please people we feel like pitifully patting Murari on his back and ask him to read more and write less.

The third play, Prasanna-Raghava of Jayadeva, is no better. He himself offers a kind of an apology by making, in the opening scene, the Actor ask the Manager as to why all poets write only about Ramachandra. It is true. By the fifteenth century when Jayadeva lived every writer was writing only about the story of Ramaya|na. So Jayadeva also narrates the same story in seven acts. As a matter of fact, by this time, not only the incidents but even the course of the various acts seem to have been fixed. The •breaking of the bow, the defeat of Parasuiiama, the slaughter of Vali, the achievements of the monkey-chiefs, the battle between Rama and Ravana, (always off the stage and described by two Vidyadharas) all these mechanically, monotonously unroll before us, brightened up here and there by the feverish poetic effusions of the dramatists. The pity of it is, the better the poetry the more out of place it would appear. Jayadeva, has in addition, tried puns (one of them is proverbially famous even to-day[1]), scenes

1. naksatrakusalo bhavan (also na ksatrakusalo bhavan)

like Ravana suddenly becoming a Rakssa with ten faces (I), of the fire in Sitss hand suddenly changing into a signet ring (VI) ; and in the last act five characters, who have actually nothing else to do, describe the evening, in turns, in nineteen verses. But the play is not yet over, as Rama's aeroplane is still on its way to the capital. The evening passes, night wears off and then the morning sun is described before the audience is permitted to disperse.

In most of these later Rama plays one motive, common to all these dramatists, is obvious. We have seen how each dramatist makes a reference to the popularity of Rama stories with writers on the whole. The reason for this popularity we do find as we read carefully through the plays. In the K.M. in the very first act Rama is referred to as Madhusudana (in spite of the clear anachronism). In 111-14 the dramatist speaks of *Ramdbhidhano Harih*, *Hari* (God) called Rama. In Pras. R. we have a line which reads *balatmand parinatah purush purdnah* the primeval purus in the form of a boy (IV-45) in which words Parasrama describes Rama, his conqueror. The poor dramatic quality seems to have been fully compensated for by the fact that the play described the glories of God. In other words, drama as drama did not interest the writer, nor, apparently, did it interest the audience. These dramatic compositions were more of sacred literature than an art, which, according to Kalidiasa, pleased people of different tastes or which, as Bhasa mentions in his Prat., was staged in palaces as mere entertainment. As if knowing this, the dramatist very scrupulously but superficially followed the rules laid down in books on dramaturgy. Thus Dinnlaga, in his K.M., makes every act end with a verse which gives a conventional description of the time of the day., Similarly, we find in these plays devices like *pravesaka* and *viskambhaka* though as in the A.R., III a *viskambhaka* describes and deals with more and important episodes than the main scene. Similarly in the Pras-R., the whole of Act IV is more of the nature of an interlude than an act in the play. Where drama is a religious recitation, it is but natural to have a dozen verses at a stretch (and in long metres) describing anything that the dramatist fancied for the moment. That incidents could be so united as to produce a dramatic atmosphere never struck these writers who were narrating incidents that were too well-known. From the fifth Veda, common to all castes, as Bharata had visualised it, drama deteriorated into what were later known as *bhajan melas.*

In these circumstances it would not surprise us if some honest soul, giving up all this make-believe, utilised drama purely for the purpose of religion or philosophy (in an age of decadence one cannot be distinguished from the other). And so we find a play called Prabodha Candroday the rise of the moon, (in the form) of knowledge by one Krisamisra Yati. This is purely a play where the traditional schools of philosophy have been discussed on their merits. All the characters that appear are mythical or abstract conceptions like *Viveka, Mahdmoha, Nivrtti, Pravjtti, Carvaka, Sraddha, Smti, Upanisd, Prabodhodaya* etc.

Prabodhacandrodaya is a play in six acts. In act I after the usual introduction Rama (God of love) and Rati (his wife) appear in a prologue where the former gives to the audience a synopsis of the story. The main story opens with king Discrimination (viveka) and his queen Understanding (mati.) The king desires, and the •queen consents, that he should take as his consort *l)panisd-Devi* (Lady Upanisad) that a son Prabodha—Awakening—may be born. Act II takes us to the enemy's camp, so to say. Curiously enough Benares Pundits get a scathing criticism (II-l) where wicked men like *Dambha* and *Ahamkdra* (Arrogance and Vanity) conspire to prevent the birth of *Prabodha.* When *Sraddha* (Faith) is trying to bring together king Viveka and lady Upanisad, Mithyadrsti (false understanding) the wife of Mahamoha (Great Ignorance) is set on her; at the same time *Sani,* (peace)[1] *SraddMs* daughter, is; to be killed by felons like *Krodha* (Anger) and *Ldbha* (Avarice) etc. Act III takes us to a different world altogether. If the Pundits of Benares are condemned as immoral hypocrites, Buddhists and Jainas and Kiapaikas get no better treatment either. The scene where the Buddhist and Jaina monks, in a drunken orgy, exhibit a lascivious desire for the Kapalika is brutally hilarious. The three Bohemians decide to abduct Sattviki Sraddha (Pure faith) who is supposed to be living in the company of one *Visnubhakti* (Devotion in God Visnu). In Act IV Sraddha herself is rescued by Visnubhakti. while the king sends soldiers to destroy those felons. The battle is described in Act V and at the end the Buddhists are driven out of India ; and so the play moves on to the last act where Lady Upanisad, who describes her stay with Yajnavidya (the lore of sacrifice) with Mimansa (Ritual Science) and with Tarkavidya (Logic), is brought to the king and the birth of Prabodha is announced. After all the learned and philosophical quest for awaken-

ing, the *Bharatavakya* sounds almost comic when it sings that 'plenty of rain should fall on the earth, kings should protect the earth, without any disturbance' etc.

That the play is very late is evident from the treatment of the subject-matter as well as from reference to the great scholar Kumarilaswamin and to the banishment of Buddhism. It is art allegory pure and simple ; the very characters produce an atmosphere of unreality, the last thing that a drama should do. If the earlier plays followed the purarric style, the Prab. C. follows the style of a treatise on philosophy. What the other founders of schools of philosophy did in their commentary on the Vedanta aphorisms, Krisamisra Yati aspires to do in the form of an allegory written as a dialogue. There is no doubt that the author is a stern-disciplined devotee of God. What he says about the book-learned Benares Pundits is enough to make every Hindu pray that he should never be born in Benares. The demoralisation of Buddhist and Jaina orders is vividly brought out in the merciless caricature of the monks. As a matter of fact, Prab. C, could be hailed as one of the best satires in Sanskrit Literature; the only objection being that the author never intended it to be such.

Krisamisra Yati, like his immediate predecessors, was intent not on producing a drama but on giving his views, explaining and illustrating them, on the philosophical truth of the Upani§adic Vedianta. We have a fiery preacher here, not a dramatist. And the author is right, since before him he had found dramatists as merely moralists. Drama in Sanskrit literature simply ceased to exist when dramatists preferred philosophising to dramatising.

CHAPTER XX

THE END

In studying the history of drama in Sanskrit literature, one could safely come to the conclusion that immediately after the age of Bhavabhuti Sanskrit Drama came to an end. It is true that long after Bhavabhuti plays were written in Sanskrit and for a still longer period a few plays in prartalso are to be found. But from the examples of such plays, as seen in the fore-going chapter, our main conclusion is actually re-inforced. It is not so surprising that plays in Sanskrit language discontinued. What is really as significant as surprising is the fact that the very drama as a literary form suddenly disappeared and disappeared for good. Upto a century ago, no modern Indian language had any dramatic literature. And today when the various Indian languages are showing an alround literary development, modern drama unlike modern poetry, cannot be traced to any traditional form (except of course the renderings of half-a-dozen classical Sanskrit dramas).

1. In an earlier place (Chap. VII) we suggested that the dramatic form of literature was not germane to the culture of the Aryans. The very religious-mindedness of the early Aryans prevented them from enjoying a dramatic representation. For a long time Sanskrit language could not be used for secular subjects ; and by the time Sanskrit language could be used for popular literature, Sanskrit had ceased to be the language of the people.

2. Secondly, Sanskrit drama, from its earliest days, belonged to the kings and the rich peoples. Bhasa, in his Pratima, tells us 'how dramatic performances were palace-entertainments. In the plays of Sri Hars, though they are performed, as the Sutradhara tells us, during the festivals, these festivals are not so much public occasions, as celebrations within the regions of the palace. Probably the fact that most of the Sanskrit plays have their scenes laid within the four walls of the palace is a corollary of this very situation. It is true that Bharata talks of drama as *sdrvavarnika;* but it is doubtful if the available literary dramas answered the democratic condition of Bharata. Even when kalidasa speaks *natyam bhinnarucer janasya bahudha apt ekam samaradhanam* **(nattya as the com-**

mon entertainment of the people of different tastes), the context makes us wonder if by *natya* Kialidasa means dance and not dramatic performance. Even if *natya* were to mean a dramatic performance, in Kalidasa's opinion' it was a *common entertainment to various people* and not *an entertainment of common people.* That even in modern days dramas in Bengal originated under the patronage and within the four walls of the mansions of rich people seems to be a genuine relic of tradition. Sanskrit drama did not belong to the people. And as the Aryan tradition was conveyed through Sanskrit and as Sanskrit gradually became merely the language of the learned, Sanskrit dramas could not make an appeal to the common man.

3. It should be remembered, in this connection, that from the days of Asoka Buddhism (and probably Jainism), like Puritanism, in England, definitely and deliberately discouraged popular entertainments. There was a time, after the Gupta Era, when Buddhism (as illustrated by king Sri Harsa) once again became the fashion Of the court! and the passion of the *savants:* more so in the north. This accounts for the fact of more plays being found mainly in southern versions. Between the revival of Buddhism and Sankara's triumphant war against Buddhism on an all-India front the interval was too short to encourage dramatic literature. And for a few centuries after Sankara, the poets and pundits and even the public, dazzled by that philosopher's brilliance, could see nothing else. By the time every thinking Hindu was mlaya-minded, the Muslim invasions began with devastating results.

4. The *elite* of Hindu society, for reasons mentioned above, was no longer interested in dramatic or any other kind of secular literature. Though Sanskrit drama never belonged so much to the common man, we would be wrong in believing that the common man had no dramas of his own. Tradition of the Indian stage gives us an idea of the type of plays that existed before and after and in spite of Kalidasa. As time went on the earlier traditional heroes like Vikrama, Udayana, Dusyanta, etc., must have become absolute strangers to the common man. And we do find that even the few Sanskrit dramatists of the later period have ceased to write about such hero-kings. The one story that was known all over the country down to the commonest man was the story of Ramayana and so we find every dramatist repeating that story retaining (almost standardising) all the popular elements of myth and superstition.

This is one of the explanations for the fact that the Rama plays were written in monotonous repetition by so many dramatists. It is only after the tenth century A.D. that, for the first time after Bhasa, we come across a few plays based on the story of the other epic viz., the Mahabharata. Such are the plays, the Balabharata of Rajasekhara, the Subhadra-Dhananjaya of Kulasekharavarma-bhupala, and Dutangada by Subhata etc. The fact that most of the later Sanskrit dramatists belong to the south is significant enough. The two epics, as couTd be seen from some Dravidian literature, were now being popularised in the south. And the Muslim invasions of the north made the south of India the inevitable champion of ancient Aryan culture and tradition.

5. That even as late as the 15th century A.D., plays could be written in Sanskrit is in itself an elequent evidence of the decay and death of Sanskrit drama. Sanskrit had long ceased to be the language of the people. Even the respect with which Sanskrit was compulsorily listened to seems to have abated. In the one Prakrt play available to us viz., the Karpuramanjari, the author, Rajasekhara, tells us almost as much in the prologue where he is explaining why he writes an all-prakrt play.

parusah sanskrita-gumphah prakrta-gumpho pi bhavati
sukumarah | purusa-mahilanam yavadiha antaram tesu tavat
(I—8 ; Sanskrit rendering)

"Sanskrit phrases are harsh indeed, prakrt phrases are sweet (and sonorous). The difference between the two is the difference between (the style of) a man and a woman/'

But as we read the prakrt play we are struck by another fact which made the decay of such dramas (Sanskrit or prakrt) inevitable. The Karpuramanjari; is called a sataka i.e. prakrt play with no prologues or interlogues. The whole play is divided into four scenes (javanikantara). In the first scene, (1) the king and queen describe the spring season, (2) the Vidusaka and the palace-maid indulge in mutual abuses couched in phrases with a farfetched sense, and (3) a kapalikabhairavananda performs magic by the power of which he brings the heroine. The scene ends with the description of sunset. In scene (ii) all the usual sickening description of love-lorn condition and of standardised excitants is found and the scene ends, once again, with the description of sunset In the third scene the king and his jester narrate their dreams, after

which Karpuramaiijari, the heroine, appears on the stage; a clandestine meeting of the king with her is arranged and the scene ends with the description of rising moon. In the last scene in spite of the queen's strong guard, the king succeeds in seeing the heroine with whom he is ultimately married through the help of the Kapalika Bhairavananda.

If we expected that Rajasekhara, because he wrote all in Prakrt, would write an original style we would be completely disappointed. Tradition has been too strong for all these writers; as a matter of fact traditional rules of dramaturgy had such sway that it was easier for an n'th rate author, following these rales, to write a strictly ' correct' play than for a genuine artist to write successfully in an original style. Dramas, paying more attention to traditional items of description, had deteriorated to poems punctuated either by description in prose or by incidents of love-intrigue. The beginning, the end, the incidents, the stage-devices, the sentiments, the objects of description—nay almost every detail of a Sanskrit play was so fixed by rules of dramaturgy that except in the names of the author, the title and the characters, one play could not be effectively distinguished from another play. No wonder then that only Rama-plays became popular because there at least you acquired the merit of having witnessed God's own doings.

6. And so it came about that the religious-mindedness of the Aryans, which once did not encourage drama, did now discourage it ultimately to its final decadence. The Aryan religion, never involving communal worship, was least likely to encourage dramatic performances. It was later, after the 10th century A.D. when the Bhakti doctrine was revived and communal worship and religious festivals came into vogue that religion was partly responsible for the revival of drama. But that was the standardised Rama-play. It took centuries and centuries before the artist could successfully rebel against doctrinnaire or religious dramas (yatria) and make drama once again the dream of Bharata, viz. a mirror of 'the doings of the world' (loka-carita), of the aspiration of Kalidasa—viz. ' a common entertainment to persons of different tastes/ or lastly, the boast of Bhavabhuti, viz. :

" Subtle representation of different emotions; actions, pleasing and intimate ; deeds of love and adventure leading along a line; lively dialogues and clever speech." (MM. 1. 4).

APPENDIX

CARUDATTA \ND MRCHHAKATIKA

Since the discovery of plays that have been ascribed to Bhasa (Bhasan(|taka cakra) the authorship of the Mrchhakatikam has become a more complicated problem. Sudraka has been described as the author of the Mrchhakatika in the prologue but the three verses' in which his description occurs become, by their very style, liable to suspicion as regards the authenticity of their contents. (1) Firstly, in 1—3 Sudraka is described as Dvijamukyatama. (2) Secondly, in 1—5 he is described as a Ksitipala, and (3) lastly, in all the three verses he is mentioned in the past tense. Add to these the fact that he is mentioned as having lived for 100 years and ten days and then immolated himself, the whole description becomes fantastic. If the Sutradhara himself is so uncertain about the author, it would not be unjustified on our part to hold that Sudraka could not be the author of this play.

And then we come across a play called (Daridra) Carudattam ascribed to Bhasa and first published in the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series. The published play is/ in four acts. One of the two Mss as the editor mentions, has the colophon avacitam Carudattam. But it is obvious to any one going through the four acts that the play could not end there. The Mrch. has ten acta The hero and the heroine are united in act V. From this one could expect the Gar. to contain at least one act more to make the story complete. However, no Ms. gives the V act; on the other hand, as mentioned above, one, out of two Mss. shows that the play (Car.) ended with the fourth act.

Whether originally the Oar. had more than four acts, there is no evidence from any source. This in itself would make all criticism irrelevant ; a comparison of the Oar. with the Mrch. would be inconclusive. However, even with the available four acts the close similarity between two plays is very striking as not only the story and the development but even words and verses are common. When the author of the Mrch. is not definitely known to the Sutradhara of that very play and when there is such an almost word-to-word similarity with the Oar. the temptation to believe that the latter was the source of and earlier than the Mrch. would appear justified. At present, the general opinion is' that Bhasa, an earlier dramatist, wrote the Car. and a later writer either completed it or copied it as Mrchhakatika.

In fairness, to those who hold this view, let it be said that they are the first to realise many an objection against that view. For one thing, if there are only four acts in the Oar. (and the story is not complete there) what reasons can we find that made Bhasa leave the play unfinished? Secondly, if the Mrchhakatikam is only a completion of the CSr. how is it that from the very first act we find not only significant

•deviations but too many verbal changes and different lines or sometimes entirely different verses themselves? If, on the other hand, the Mrchhakatikam is modelled on the Car. how is it that a dramatist who could write and write well six independent acts could not write the first four without copying freely from the Car. ? As long as these two questions could not be answered satisfactorily, we shall not be justified in supporting the generally held view.

To begin with, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to explain why Bhasa should have left the Carudatta unfinished That the play is unfinished there is no doubt about it. Even as the fourth act ends we are left with the expectation of the heroine going to meet the hero. Moreover, durdina (the stormy day) that is described in act V of the Mrchhakatika is referred to by the Cheti before the fourth act of Carudatta ends. Just a little before that, when the heroine informs the Cheti about the love-episode of Sajjalika and Madanika ending in their marriage, the Ceti says -.—Priyam me amrtanka natakam samvrttam. It is a very curious and unusual remark which, on second thoughts makes us wonder if it is not a criticism of the other play viz. the Mrchhakatika. Before we hazard an opinion on this, let us review more carefully the so-called close resemblances in the two plays.

When we remember that the CSrudatta is available only in its first four acts we obviously expect that it would not contain the sub-plot of the revolution against king Palaka. This sub-plot is fully developed only in the last five acts of the Mrchhakatika. But it is strange why the fifth act is not available in C&rudatta though that act only describes the meeting of the hero with the heroine. The Oarudatta not only does not conntain the sub-plot as developed in the last acts of the Mrchhakatika but even the casual references to it in the earlier acts of the Mrchhakatika are not to be found in the Carudatta. Thus in the prologue of the Mrchhakatika, the Suttradhara getting angry with cumaavrdha says :—Ah dasyah putra Cumaavrdha kada nu khahu twam kupitena rajna Palakena navavadhukeisakalapamiva saugandha chhedyamanam prakwye. In the Carudatta, however, only that context in the prologue is not to be found and hence there is no reference to the king palaka. The gambler's scene in Mrchh. II is entirety absent in the Car. Here also, among other things, there is a reference to the subplot Dardurakah :—Kathitam ca mama priyavayasya Sarvilakena yathla kila Aryakanama Gopaladarakah Sidhadesena samavista raja sravitsyateeti. Similarly, in Mrcch. Ill the hero tells us that it was one rebhila who gave *i* the music performance. This rebhila (act IV, Mrchh. is mentioned as the friend of sarvilaka also. But in the Gar. we are told that it was slabala who gave the music performance. From all this, it appears as if the Car. is making a studious effort to eschew all references to the sub-plot of the revolt of Aryaka.

The omission of the gambler's scene in the Car. suggests another possibility as could be verified by other examples. The gamblers' scene, as) shown in the Mrchh., has that peculiar stage technique which is represented throughout the play. Besides an apartment of Vasantasena

that is revealed at the opening of the act, we go over the open road, a temple, a crowd scene and then we follow the Samvahaka running ultimately into Vasantasenia's apartment. This change of scene is avoided in the Car. Not only here, but even in other places where the Mrchh. changes the scene, the Car. does not. Even in act I, during the chase of the heroine by Sakara, the Oar. shows a clumsiness by introducing, the scene between a verse by the hero and his mention of the offering later—the idea of the verse and the offering not at all being related as they are in the Mrchh. Similarly in act IV all those changes of scene where Madanika meets Sarvilaka and where the Vidusaka passes through many apartments are entirely omitted in the Car.

In spite of the 'almost word-to-word' resemblances, the variations appear to be really more significant. The more we analyse variations, the more obvious! it appears that only two facts govern all of them : (1) the avoidance of all reference to the sub-plot, and (2) the omission of all contexts involving a change of scene within the body of an act.

In anotheil place, I have analysed all the thirteen plays ascribed to Bhasa from the point of view of the proportion of anustabh verses to the total number of verses in each play and suggested that those plays where the proportion! was very low formed a distinct group of themselves and also could be clearly distinguished from those in a different group. The •Car. is one where this proportion is low (17 anuistabh out of a total of 55 verses). Here I carry that suggestion further by staying that the plays belonging to the group containing the Oar. are of a different and an inferior author than that of the group containing Svapnavasavadatta and others. This suggestion of mine is supported by the comparison of the Car. and the Mrchh. as described above. That comparison shows to us the possibility of the Car. itself being a revised or a stage-version of the Mrchh. With the latter play before him the author of the Car. freely used the names riayakah (for Carudatta), Gajoika (for Vasantasenla), Sajjalaka (Pkt for Sarvilaka) and so on. But as he revised the Mrchh- the author of the Car. must have found two things he disliked : one, a successful revolt against a reigning king and the other the sufferings of the hero and that too at the hands of the King's brother-in-law. Besides, there are scenes of apparent death of the heroine, of the death-sentence and of the execution place and of Carudatta's wife attempting *'Satl* As the Ceti in act IV of Car. says, the author of the revised version did not like any death-scenes or associations with death ; he preferred an amrta anka-niataka. A Bhasa who could show Duryodhana die on the stage would never put such a limitation on his art.

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